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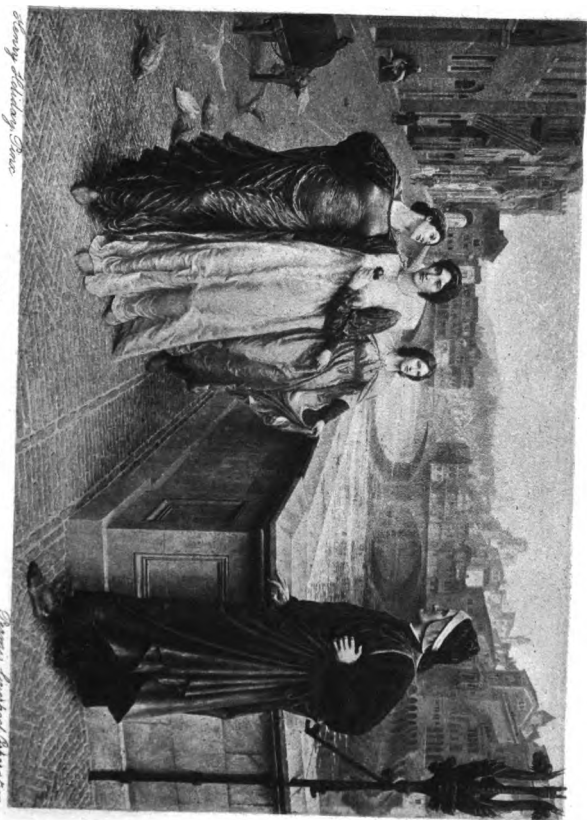
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THE LIFE OF DANTE



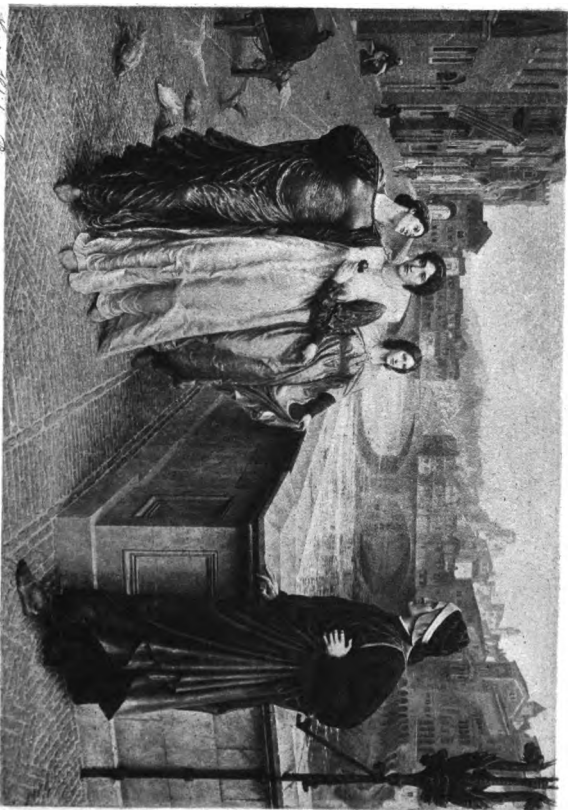




Henry Melbury Jones

James Henrywood Spauldon

Clara and Barbara.



Henry Pickers, Engraver

Dante and Beatrice.

James Heathwell, Designer

THE LIFE OF DANTE

By the late
E. H. PLUMPTRE D.D.
Dean of Wells

EDITED BY ARTHUR JOHN BUTLER
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EDITOR'S NOTE

IN the fourteen years which have elapsed since the appearance of Dean Plumptre's *Life of Dante* a good deal of labour has been bestowed upon the investigation of points connected with the history of the poet and his times; and it may be doubted whether the accomplished author himself would still be prepared to maintain all the positions which his enthusiasm for his subject then led him to take up. At all events it was thought that, another edition being called for, something might be done in the way of pruning down a little of the somewhat exuberant conjecture in which the Dean, after the fashion of an earlier school of biographers, was apt to indulge. This has been done very sparingly; and a good deal has been left which the present editor is by no means prepared to endorse; but it is hoped that in

EDITOR'S NOTE

the *Life* as it stands, readers will find nothing which research has shown to be demonstrably incorrect. After all, a little credulity as to the possibilities of a great man's career is not a whit more unscholarly than the indiscriminate scepticism which accepts no statement that does not fit with its own, often limited, insight into human nature.

CONTENTS

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| LIST OF ABBREVIATED REFERENCES | II |
| PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED | 13 |
| EARLY BOYHOOD | 21 |
| THE VITA NUOVA | 47 |
| MARRIED AND PUBLIC LIFE | 61 |
| CONFLICT AND DEFEAT | 99 |
| THE SUFFERINGS OF THE EXILE | 125 |
| THE DREAM AND THE AWAKENING | 157 |
| WANDERINGS AND DEATH | 197 |
| NOTE ON IRMER'S "ROMFAHRT KAISER HEIN- RICH'S VII." | 239 |
| INDEX | 247 |

LIST OF ABBREVIATED REFERENCES

- Arriv.*—Arrivabene, F. Il Secolo di Dante, 1838.
B.—Dante. Ballate.
Bartoli—Bartoli, A. Storia della Litteratura Italiana, 1884.
Bocc. V. D.—Boccaccio, G. Vita di Dante.
Bocc. Dec.—Boccaccio, G. Decameron.
Boeth.—Boethius. De Consolatione Philosophiæ, 1843.
C. or Cans.—Dante. Canzoni.
Church, R. W.—Essay on Dante in "Essays and Reviews," 1854.
Comm.—Dante. Commedia.
Conv.—Dante. Convito.
Crowe—Crowe and Cavalcaselle. History of Italian Painters.
D'Agincourt—D'Agincourt. History of Art, 1847.
Denifle—Denifle, P. H. Die Universitäten des Mittelalters, 1885.
D. C. A.—Dictionary of Christian Antiquities (W. Smith), 1875-80.
D. Gesell.—Deutsche Dante-Gesellschaft Jahrbücher, 1867-77.
D. C. or Dino C.—Dino Compagni. Cronica Fiorentina, 1876.
Ep.—Dante. Epistolæ.
Faur.—Fauriel, M. Dante et les Origines de la Langue et de la Littérature Italiennes, 1854.
Ferr. M. D.—Ferrazzi, G. J. Manuale Dantesco, 1865.
Frat. O. M.—Fratricelli, P. Opere Minore di Dante Alighieri, 1873-79.
Frat. V. D.—Fratricelli, P. Storia della Vita di Dante Alighieri, 1861.

ABBREVIATED REFERENCES

- Gui. Pis.*—Guido Pisano. MS. Commentary on the Inferno, in the British Museum, circ. 1330.
- H.*—Dante. The Inferno.
- Irmer*—Die Romfahrt Kaiser Heinrich's VII., 1881.
- Krafft*—Krafft, Carl. Dante's Lyrische Gedichte, 1859.
- Lacroix*—Lacroix, Paul. Sciences et Lettres du Moyen Age, 1877.
- Lindsay*—Lindsay, Lord. Sketches of the History of Christian Art, 1885.
- Malisp.*—Malispini, Ricordano. Storia Fiorentina, 1876.
- Menzel*—Menzel, C. A. Die Geschichten des Deutschen, 1819.
- Met.*—Ovid. Metamorphoses.
- Milm. L. C.*—Milman, H. H. History of Latin Christianity, ed. 1867.
- Mon.*—Dante. De Monarchiâ, ed. Fraticelli, Opere Minore, 1873.
- Mon. Franc.*—Monumenta Franciscana, ed. J. S. Brewer, 1858.
- Murat.*—Muratori. Italicarum Rerum Scriptores, 1723—51.
- Napier (or Nap.)*—Napier. Florentine History, 1846.
- Op. Tert.*—Bacon, Roger. Opus Tertium, ed. J. S. Brewer, 1859.
- Ott.*—Ottimo Comento della Divina Commedia (1330), 1827—29.
- Par.*—Dante. The Paradiso.
- Phil.*—Philalethes (King John of Saxony). Dante Alighieri's Göttliche Comödie, 1865.
- Pott*—Pott, A. F. Die Personen Namen, 1853.
- Purg.*—Dante. The Purgatorio.
- Serrav.*—Serravalle, Giov. da. MS. Latin Translation of the Commedia with Commentary, in the British Museum, 1414.
- S. or Sonn.*—Dante. Sonetti.
- V. E.*—Dante. De Vulgari Eloquentia, ed. Fraticelli, 1873.
- V. N.*—Dante. Vita Nuova, ed. Fraticelli, 1873.
- Vill.*—Villani, G. Croniche, 1857.
- Weg.*—Wegele, F. X. Dante Alighieri's Leben und Werke, 1879.
- Witte, D. F.*—Witte. Dante Forschungen, 1879.

PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED

THE writer of a Life of Dante has before him a task of no ordinary difficulty. The actual facts resting on contemporary documentary evidence are but few and meagre. They form hardly more than the skeleton of a biography. Traditions, anecdotes, one might almost say legends, inferences more or less hypothetical from his writings, are wanted to clothe the skeleton, first with the flesh and blood of a living man, and then with garments of the form and fashion of his time. These exist, it is true, in sufficient abundance, and have furnished the raw materials for most of the compilations which pass current as Lives of Dante. They have been worked up by different writers in ways that vary with their characters. Easy-going gossiping novelists like Boccaccio take what comes ready to their hands, and present a narrative, if not absolutely veracious, yet

THE LIFE OF DANTE

light and entertaining as a chapter in the *Decameron*. Omnivorous collectors like Balbo and Pelli bring together a vast mass of traditions and conjectures, "things new and old," to which others may resort for compilation on a smaller scale, and to which most later writers are more or less indebted. Men with the enthusiasm of a dominant idea, like Ozanam and Rossetti and Aroux, construct (in the instances I have named, from very opposite standpoints) an ideal Dante out of their inner consciousness, likely enough to mislead the unwary, yet not without a touch of inventive genius from which the wary may at least learn something. Critics of a less credulous or imaginative type, like Filelfo in a former generation, and Bartoli in our own, come in to destroy what others have thus built up, subject traditions and conjectures to the ruthless analysis of an ultra-Straussian scepticism, prove to their own satisfaction that after all we have nothing but the bones of the skeleton, and that they are very dry. Lastly, here, as in other regions of literature, Père Hardouin meets us as out-paradoxing all paradoxes, and

PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED

maintaining that Dante's name and writings are but a simulacrum in literature, and that the *Commedia* was the work of a follower of Wyklyf in the fifteenth century. If, as he used to say, he didn't get up at three o'clock in the morning to repeat what had been said before him, "verily he has his reward." Of him it may be enough to say, *Guarda e passa*. Happily Dante literature has not been without its workers of a higher stamp, who have set themselves to build up as well as to destroy, to sweep away the chaff in order that they may gather the wheat into their garner. In Italian writers like Scartazzini and Fraticelli, in Germans like Wegele and Witte, in English writers such as Maria Rossetti, Mrs. Oliphant, and Mr. J. A. Symonds, and above all in Dean Church and J. R. Lowell, whose Essays on Dante stand as the most masterly studies in our own or any other language, I recognise the Masters of Israel at whose feet I have been glad to sit, and whose teaching, while reserving the right of an independent judgment, I have often been glad to follow.

The result of all this confluence of hetero-

THE LIFE OF DANTE

geneous material and discordant workmanship is, that the writer of a Life of Dante must be prepared for controversies at every step, and those controversies spread over a singularly voluminous literature. How was his name spelt, and what was its meaning? Where and when was he born? Was he of a noble or plebeian house? Was Brunetto Latini his schoolmaster or tutor? Did he study in the Universities of Bologna, Paris, Oxford, in early life, or only after his exile, or not at all? Did he really fall in love with Beatrice at the age of nine? Was she married when he wrote his first sonnet or afterwards, or not at all? Did she return his affection and die with his name upon her lips, or treat him with a cool indifference? Who was the lady whom he pretended to love, and who the "*donna gentile*" that pitied him after Beatrice's death? Or was there ever a flesh and blood Beatrice? Can we see in her more than the creation of the poet's brain? and if so, was she simply an ideal of womanhood, or the symbol of Catholic dogma or Ghibelline politics, or of one of the Gnostic, Manichæan, Pantheistic heresies which were

PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED

imputed to the Albigenses? And what were Dante's own religious convictions? Was he a devout Catholic, or an infidel wearing the mask of Catholicism? Or did he pass through a phase of scepticism, returning to the true faith at last? Was he pure, or at least decent, in his home-life, or conspicuously licentious? Was his Ghibellinism the cause or the consequence of his exile? Was his married life happy or unhappy, and if the latter, was the fault his or his wife's? How many children had he, and what were their names? Did he visit Rome before he went as envoy from Florence, or did he never go there at all? Did he write the first seven cantos of the *Inferno* before his exile? and if so, in Latin or Italian? And when did he finish that and the other portions of the *Commedia*, and when did he publish them, if he published them at all? Did he borrow the plan of the *Commedia* from the boy-visions of Alberic of Monte-Cassino, or from that of the Monk of Melrose, as told by Beda, or from the *Tophet and Eden* of the great Jewish poet of the thirteenth century, Immanuel of Rome? And when did he write

THE LIFE OF DANTE

each of the other books that are commonly assigned to him? Was the *Vita Nuova* the earliest or all but the latest of those books? Which of the poems not in the *Vita Nuova* or in the *Convito* are to be received as genuine? and which of the letters ascribed to him? Can we trace the wanderings of his exile? Did he then go to Paris? if so, for the second or the first time? What were his relations with Can Grande of Verona? Have the anecdotes which belong to this period the interest of showing how he "struck his contemporaries," what people said of him at the time, or are they only the rubbish of literary *raconteurs* of later date? Add to these problems the fact that "victorious criticism" has applied its tests to documents that have hitherto passed current as authentic, such, *e.g.*, as the *Letter of Frate Ilario*, and even Malispini's *Chronicles*, and pronounced them spurious, and it will be seen that the path which lies before the biographer is sufficiently difficult and beset with snares and stumbling-blocks.

How far I have succeeded in walking warily in this dangerous region it will be for my

PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED

readers to judge. I will content myself with saying at the outset that I have not renounced the hope of bringing before them, not as in an "ideal biography," the man Dante Alighieri, as one of like passions with ourselves, as he lived and moved, as he thought and acted. I shall distinguish as I proceed between the certain, the doubtful, and the conjectural elements of his life; but I do not despair of taking students, as it were, within the brain and heart of the great poet of Mediæval Christendom. And in regard to the two chief questions at issue—the ultimate devotion and earnestness of Dante's faith and the historical personality of Beatrice de' Portinari—I will say at the outset, after working my way through all the speculations of Rossetti, and the *delirantium somnia* of Aroux, and all the scepticism of Bartoli, *Manet immota fides*.

EARLY BOYHOOD

ÆT. 1-18.

A.D. 1265-1283.

THE opening scene of our drama is the small Piazza of the Church of S. Martino del Vescovo in Florence. It stands in one of the oldest, least altered portions of that city, in what was known as the first of the Sesti, or six districts into which Florence was divided, not far from the Porta S. Piero (*Par.* xvi. 41).^{*} After the manner of the time members of the same family lived, for the sake of mutual protection, in the same neighbourhood, and the family from which Dante sprang had several houses lying between the church and the great Benedictine abbey. In one of these, nearly opposite the church, if the local traditions be trustworthy,

^{*} See the historical map of Florence in the *App.* to *Phil.*, showing the several stages of the city's growth, and Witte, *D. F.* i. pp. 1-19, *Der Plan von Florenz um das Jahr 1300.*

THE LIFE OF DANTE

and the house now shown as the *Casa di Dante* be actually the poet's birthplace, lived, in 1265, a citizen named Aldighiero. It was distinctly the house of a burgher and not of a noble. There was no gateway leading into a courtyard, no tower rising, as in the dwellings of counts and barons, over its humbler neighbours. The rooms were small. Aldighiero himself was an inconspicuous citizen, of whom almost nothing is known. His brother Brunetto served at Montaperti as one of the guardians of the Carroccio, or Car of State, which figured in all military enterprises, and the loss or safety of which was the measure of victory or defeat, and with another brother, Gherardo, was one of the procurators (= churchwardens) of the parish (*Frat. V. D.* p. 29). Aldighiero himself had a house and landed property in Florence and the neighbourhood (*Frat. V. D.* pp. 42-50). Altogether we may picture him to ourselves as a respectable representative of the burgher class in a rising and prosperous city of Italy in the thirteenth century. As such, he and his father had naturally been Guelphs, had been, that is, on the side of the people and

EARLY BOYHOOD

the Pope, as against the oppression of the Imperial Vicars who administered the affairs of the Empire, and of the feudal nobility who adhered to the cause of Ghibellinism as that of their natural protector. Dante's forefathers, however, did not look upon themselves as belonging to the *demos* of Florence. Their position in the centre of the city showed that they were of the old inhabitants, the *popolo vecchio*, the *populus* (to use the word in its classic sense) of Florence, not of the *plebs* who had flocked in from Fiesole, and were looked on with contempt as a rougher and coarser race (*H.* xv. 62; *Par.* xvi. 49-51). They cherished the memory of a great ancestor, the Cacciaguida of *Par.* xv.-xvii., who had been a crusader under the Emperor Conrad III. in 1143, and identified themselves with the descendants of the old Romans who had made Florence the daughter of the imperial city* (*H.* xv. 77; *Ep.* v. 4). What their older

* The descent from Rome involved, of course, a share in the glories of the Troy from which Rome had sprung. What the legends of Brut and Troynovant were to Spenser (*F. Q.* ii. 10), that the story of Æneas and his companions was to Dante. The younger Priam and Antenor had founded Venice and Padua. The prominence given to Electra in *H.* iv. 121, is connected with the belief that she

THE LIFE OF DANTE

name had been we have no exact knowledge, but tradition connected them with the Elisei (*Par.* xv. 136), or the Frangipani, who had been famous at Rome in the tenth and eleventh centuries.* The name Aldighiero had come into the family through the marriage of Cacciaguida with a daughter of a house of that name in Ferrara or Parma. As with many family names in old records, our own Shakespeare being perhaps the most memorable instance, that name appears in many varieties of spelling (some twelve are reckoned), ending in the Alighieri which has become historical. The idea which has naturally attracted the play of fancy (so, *e.g.*, with Mr. J. A. Symonds), that it was a case of *nomen et omen*, as though the name meant the "wing-bearer," must be rejected as resting on a false etymology, adopted by the poet's descendants

had founded Fiesole, as the first city in Europe (*Vill.* i. 5, 7).

* Dante's silence as to any ancestors beyond Cacciaguida (*Par.* xvi. 43-45) has been taken to intimate that what he knew of them was not to their credit. A comparison of *H.* iv. 104, *V. N.* c. 29, will show that this was precisely his formula for implying the exact opposite. Like St. Paul, he would not speak of the things of which he might have boasted (2 *Cor.* xi. xii.).

EARLY BOYHOOD

at Verona (suggested probably by the device of the Scaligeri there), and embodied, after the fashion of what is called "canting" heraldry, in the new coat of arms, a wing *or* on a field *azure*, that replaced the older shield, which, in form, though not in colour, was that of the Frangipani. Experts trace the name, the termination of which we find in our English Eadgar, to a German origin (*Adel-ger* = noble spear). A fanciful derivation from "*alga*," *aliga*, as though the name meant "seaweed gatherers," and the family had come from the Maremma * (Pott, *Fam. Namen*, pp. 193, 245), may be neglected.

By his first marriage with Lapa de' Cialuffi, Aldighiero had a daughter, married to Leone Poggi, whose son Andrea we shall meet hereafter, and a son Francesco, of whom we know

* Compare the elaborate paper by K. Witte and others in *D. Gesell.* i. 149-168. He hesitates between the meaning given above and that of "foreign," "whole," "old," or "hero" for the first part of the word. Professor Max Müller, in a letter in answer to my inquiries, says that the "name is certainly Teutonic," but shares Witte's doubts. Anyhow, there is proof enough to show that Germans may rightly say of the great Florentine—"We also have a share in him." Englishmen may perhaps regret that they cannot prove the name to be more than analogous to "Shakespeare."

THE LIFE OF DANTE

nothing more than that he married, had children, and died in 1332;* by his second, with Bella (surname unknown), his only child was the poet. He shared the fortunes of his party after the Ghibelline victory of Montaperti in 1260 (*H.* x. 85; *Par.* vi. 112), and was banished from the city; but he, or at least his wife, returned in or before 1265, and in the month of May, as indicated by the allusions to the poet's birth under the genial influences of Gemini in *H.* xv. 55, *Par.* xxii. 112, she gave birth to a child, who received the name of Durante, contracted popularly into Dante.† The choice of the name is probably traceable, as it had not occurred previously in the history of the family, to its significance as indicating permanence. As the example of Dante da Maiano shows, it was not uncommon. The day of birth remains

* For the fullest account of the Alighieri family see Litta's magnificent *Famiglie Istoriche* and Passerini *Della Famiglia di D.*

† The kindred name of "Durandus" is familiar enough. Durante appears as a surname in the eighteenth century, Peter Durante setting to music the *Die Ira* of Thomas of Celano. The Venetian Dandolo may have a like origin. Durant is found in England among the descendants of the Huguenots (Yonge, *Christ. Names*, i. p. 389).

EARLY BOYHOOD

doubtful. Popular tradition, sufficiently accepted to form the basis of a sexcentenary festival at Florence in 1865, fixed May 14; but Witte (*D. F.* ii. 28; *D. Gesell.* i. 145) conjecturally assigns May 30 as being the *Festa* of the Florentine S. Lucia, and thus accounting for the prominence given to that saint in *H.* ii. 97, *Purg.* ix. 55, *Par.* xxxii. 137. The after-thoughts of the next generation must be credited with the legends reported by Boccaccio (*V. D.*) as to the mother's dream that she gave birth to her son under a lofty bay-tree and by a clear stream; that he grew up feeding on the berries and drinking of the water of the brook; that he became a shepherd and strove to gather the laurel leaves for a crown; and that, as he struggled for them, he was transformed into a peacock.

Of the character of the poet's mother we know next to nothing. In the one solitary passage in which there is any allusion to her (*H.* viii. 45), he seems to connect her influence, either by heredity or example, with his "scorn of scorn," if not with his "love of love"; and we have no records of her from the pen of

THE LIFE OF DANTE

others. There is, however, a certain kind of suggestiveness in the manifold pictures of child-life in which the *Commedia* abounds (*Ferr. M. D.* gives fifteen), almost as tender and pathetic in their way as those of Keble's *Lyra Innocentium*. We have the mother rescuing her child from fire (*H.* xxiii. 37), soothing it when it is in the delirium of fever (*Par.* i. 102), hearing its penitent confessions when it has done wrong (*Purg.* xxxi. 64), the one refuge which the child seeks instinctively in terror or disquiet (*Purg.* xxx. 44; *Par.* xxii. 1, xxiii. 121). I, for one, can scarcely help seeing in these touches the memories of early childhood, which rose, even in manhood and old age, clear and distinct in the hazy dimness of the past, just as I find in *Par.* xv. 121-126 the recollection of the lullabies of his own infancy, and the tales of Fiesole and Rome, which had made him feel in early boyhood that he was a "citizen of no mean city." I have no wish, as I have said, to write an "ideal biography," but reading backwards from Giotto's portrait in the Bargello of Florence, I seem to see a child of quick eager intelligence,

EARLY BOYHOOD

with dark, glancing, melancholy, dreamy eyes, with hair of the golden auburn—"flavescere" is the word he uses of himself (*Ep. ad Joann. Virg.* i. 44)—often seen in Italian boys, which darkens afterwards into brown, asking many questions and saying strange things, devout with a child's devotion to the Virgin and the saints, especially S. Lucia, learning his Latin Grammar, probably at the Abbey school,* in the Manual of Donatus (*Par.* xii. 137). Altogether a precocious boy this, of whom friends and teacher may well augur great things, such a one as a later generation saw in John Pico de Mirandola and the "admirable" Crichton, as our own century has seen in John Stuart Mill and Connop Thirlwall. On such a boy the interdict which Gregory X. laid on the city from 1273-1276 must have worked with a strange effect. No bells rung, no masses said, the gates of heaven closed by him who had the keys that he might open—this, I take it, must have heightened the natural susceptibility of the devout boy, and

* The earliest notice of any state High-School at Florence is in 1320 (*Denifle*, i. 553).

THE LIFE OF DANTE

borne strange fruit in after years (*Purg.* iii. 124-135; *Par.* xxvii. 46-51).

But the most startling instance of that precocity, of which one scarcely knows whether to speak of it as physical, psychical, or spiritual, or blending all three elements in undefinable proportions, is that of which we read in the opening chapter of the *Vita Nuova*. For the boy Dante that *Incipit Vita Nova* which he wrote in the book of memory, meant more than that he had passed from childhood to youth as other boys pass. A new world, a new life was opening on him on that May morning when he went at the age of nine with his father to the house of their neighbour, Folco de' Portinari, for a *festa* after the manner of the time, and saw the form of the child Bice or Beatrice—so people called her, not thinking in either case what the name meant (*V. N.* c. 1)—a few months younger, clothed in crimson, and in the radiance of an angel-like beauty, with fair hair and bright blue eyes and pearl-white complexion (*Purg.* xxxi. 116; *V. N.* c. 36). The stirrings of the new life began, and the boy, who had been accustomed

EARLY BOYHOOD

to say his prayers and hymns and read his Bible, and talk with his master and school-fellows, in Latin, and with whom, therefore, it was not strange to think and soliloquise in that language, felt something like fear and trembling at the nascent emotion. Following the physiology of his time, in which all perceptions and emotions were ascribed to the action of distinct forces or "spirits" in man's nature, he seemed to hear their voices speaking within him, and the spirit of life in the heart said, "*Ecce Deus fortior me, qui veniens dominabitur mihi*," and the animal, or psychical, spirit in the brain said to the spirit of vision, "*Apparuit jam beatitudo vestra*;" yes, and even the spirit of the lower life of nutrition and digestion—one smiles at the naïve truthfulness of the confession from one whose health had suffered at once from study and emotion (*V. N. c. 23*), said, "*Heu miser—quia frequentius impeditus ero deinceps*" (*V. N. c. 2*). Nowhere in literature, not even in the Confessions of Augustine or Rousseau, is there such an unveiling of the *genesis* of a master-passion as that which is thus recorded. That

THE LIFE OF DANTE

day, even for the boy of nine, was the turning-point of his destiny. For a long time it stood out in his memory apart by itself, and its very isolation gave it a peculiar power. As in most cities of Europe in the thirteenth century, the girls of well-to-do families were brought up in great seclusion at home, or sent to a convent school, and nine years passed before a single word from Beatrice's lips fell on her boy-lover's ears (*V. N. c. 3*). If he saw her at all, it was only with a stolen glance in the Church of S. Lucia or S. Martin. Meantime the education of the boy went on, quickened into even greater activity than before by the hope of one day doing something to win Beatrice's praise, and do honour to her name. It was about this time (1) that he lost his father (1274, within a few months, *i.e.*, of the great crisis), and (2) that he probably came under the influence of Brunetto Latini. There is no evidence that Brunetto kept a school, or was in any sense a professional teacher, his occupation being that of *dettatore* (secretary or town-clerk) in the little republic of Florence, rising, at times, to the dignity of ambassador (*Vill. vi. 74*).

EARLY BOYHOOD

A man of his culture and general kindness, however, could hardly fail to be interested in the clever and precocious orphan; and as the boy was passing into adolescence, he came under Brunetto's instruction. The influence was partly good and partly evil. The man was an almost typical representative of the earlier *renaissance*. He had been exiled as a Guelph, after Montaperti (*Vill.* vi. 80), and had spent his exile in France, probably at Paris. He was conversant with Latin literature, translated Cicero, perhaps knew a little Greek, studied the *Trouvères* of France and the Troubadours of Provence, was an omnivorous collector of encyclopædic knowledge on all subjects—astronomy, botany, zoology, ancient and modern history, geography. He embodied all his stores of knowledge in a French book, with the title of the *Trésor*. He wrote a kind of Pilgrim's Progress in Italian verse, which he published as his *Tesoretto*, describing, in a manner which may have suggested the opening lines of the *Inferno*, how he had been lost in the dark forest of error, and had been led on to Truth and Holiness. He could discourse

THE LIFE OF DANTE

eloquently, "drawing fine pictures," to use Butler's phrase, of the beauty of Virtue. The influence of such a man was, for the time, attractive for good to the young and ardent student. He was kind, fatherly, and genial in his look and manner. He taught him how man attains to an eternity of fame, perhaps also how he may gain an eternal blessedness (*H.* xv. 82-87 *n.*). For all this Dante could not but feel grateful to him. But, on the other hand, he was, in his own phrase, *un poco mondanetto*, "a man of the world," worldly, a sensualist whose vices were of the deepest dye.* There must have been a moment in Dante's youth when the discovery of that baseness opened to him, as it were, the burning depths of the abyss, and so far as he at least knew, Brunetto had never shown any real contrition (*H.* xv.). He had died (1294) like many others of his type, and had made no sign (*Vill.* viii. 10).

For the time, however, the mind of the

* It is suggestive that Roger Bacon records the fact that some foreign lecturers were banished from Paris by Louis IX. for like flagrant immoralities. (*Comp. Stud.* ii. 5.)

EARLY BOYHOOD

student expanded under this culture. He learnt to read French and Provençal poetry, including the cyclic poets of the Arthurian legends (*V. E.* i. 10), especially perhaps Sordello (*Purg.* vi., vii.) and Arnaud Daniel (*Purg.* xxvi. ; *V. E.* ii. 2); became acquainted with the earlier Italian poets, Guittone of Arezzo (*Purg.* xxiv. 56, xxvi. 124), Jacopo da Lentino (*Purg.* xxiv. 56), and Guido Guinicelli (*Purg.* xi. 97, xxvi. 92). He must have had some practice in writing, with them as his models, in order to attain the facility shown in his earliest extant sonnet, written at eighteen (*V. N.*, S. 1). With this there were other forms of art in which he delighted. Cimabue and Giotto were then in Florence, and the latter was Dante's personal friend, the well-born Florentine, proud of his ancestry, recognising the nobility of genius in the peasant artist; and the poet who wrote of angels could also paint them * (*Purg.* xi. 94 ; *V. N.* c. 35).

* I cannot help quoting Browning's lines :—

“ You and I would rather see that angel,
Painted by the tenderness of Dante,
Would we not?—than read a fresh Inferno.”

—*Men and Women—One Word More.*

THE LIFE OF DANTE

The former had his studio outside the Porta S. Piero, not far from Dante's home, and Dante, then a boy of eight, may have taken part in the great procession, in honour of the celebrated Madonna, which was said to have stamped on that quarter of the city the name of the Borgo Allegri (1273) (*Crowe and Cavalc.* i. 202-234). Casella, whom he met in the "milder shades of Purgatory," initiated him in the mysteries of music, set his verses to melodious tunes, taught him, we may believe, to appreciate the beauties of Church hymns and Antiphons (*Purg.* ii. 91). We seem to see the two in Belacqua's shop, as the musical instrument-maker lounged lazily in his chair or took his afternoon *siesta* (*Purg.* iv. 126). Guido Cavalcanti, some years older than himself, bright, genial, cultivated, became his chiefest friend (*V. N.* c. 3, 31), and the two were as David and Jonathan, Orestes and Pylades, in their intimacy, divided only by their different estimate of Virgil. This, in itself but as a "little rift," may have been the symbol of a difference in thought, feeling, creed, morals that went down to the foundations

EARLY BOYHOOD

of life, and widened into a chasm (*H.* x. 63).^{*} Then there were also Cino of Pistoia, whose numerous sonnets and *canzoni* to his Selvaggia led Dante to class him as emphatically the "poet of love," while he claimed for himself the higher honour of being the "poet of righteousness" (*V. E.* ii. 2; *Bart.* iv. c. 3-5), and Dante of Maiano, somewhat cynical and coarse, and given (*e.g.*, his answer to *S.* 1) to much "chaffing" of his sentimental friends. Villani, the future historian of Florence, was, at least, his neighbour, and probably his friend (*Vill.* ix. 136). And among the memories of those days, if I mistake not, was one of a lady advanced in years, but retaining much of the "fatal gift of beauty," for which she had been famous, living in a convent, a friend of the Cavalcanti, full of good works, emancipating her serfs, kindly and benignant, fond of all children, specially interested in

^{*} Bocc. (*Dec.* vi. 9) says that his scepticism extended to the threshold of atheism. Bartoli (iv. 162) quotes a painfully suggestive sonnet as to Guido's licence by Lapo di Farinata degli Uberti. His father is placed by Dante in the circle of the Epicureans, *i.e.*, Materialists, and he had married the daughter of Farinata, who is also in that circle.

THE LIFE OF DANTE

a boy whose genius and force of character reminded her of her own Sordello in the distant past, the Cunizza whom, in spite of all her sins—and they were many—Dante placed in Paradise (it is true in its Venus-sphere) when he was nearing the close of his own life, and Paradise was becoming to him a living and near reality (*Par.* ix. 32 n.).

Nor was the young man's life that of a student, litterateur, artist only. He threw himself into the sports of his age and class, and became a master of the art of falconry, which the Emperor Frederick II., who wrote an elaborate treatise on it, had made popular throughout Italy. MSS. of that treatise (*D'Aginc.* iii. fol. 73) are extant, copiously illustrated with illuminations of every detail, which Dante may have seen, and which, over and above his own manifest delight and keenness of observation, may have suggested some of the many similes in the *Commedia* drawn from the falconer and the falcon (*H.* xvii. 127, xxii. 130; *Purg.* xix. 64; *Par.* xix. 34). I picture the boy Dante further, as one who loved eagerly to dwell on the traditions of the past, who rejoiced to hear

EARLY BOYHOOD

the tales of Cacciaguida and Bellincione Berti (*Par.* xv. 112), looked back upon the good old days, knew every tower and gate and church in Florence, with all the legends that had grown up round them, the families that had died out or were still flourishing, the changes from poverty to wealth or wealth to poverty (*Par.* xv., xvi.), as well as Scott knew the traditions of the Borderland; who rejoiced alike in the *fiesta* of March 30th, a survival of Paganism, when the old statue of Mars on the Ponte Vecchio was decked with flowers (*Gui. Pis.* on *H.* xiii. 143), and in the services of the Baptistery. In the font of that building his great crusading forefather had been christened, in it he himself had been signed with the sign of the cross as a soldier of Christ; it was to his dying day still his "beautiful St. John" (*H.* xix. 17; *Par.* xv. 134, xxv. 8), and to it every true citizen of Florence, all of whom were, as a rule, baptized there, looked as a bond of union amidst all their manifold divisions (*D. C.* ii. p. 258).

Was his life confined within the narrow limits of the streets of Florence? That ques-

THE LIFE OF DANTE

tion, in the absence of adequate *data*, cannot be answered with certainty, but an affirmative answer seems to me in the highest degree improbable. Boys in the Middle Ages were turned out for their *wanderjahre*, to see the world, and to pick up knowledge, at an age which seems to us almost startlingly young. The universities were largely public schools, "academies," more in the modern English sense of the term than in the higher classical ideal. Boys went there to learn their *trivium* * and *quadrivium*, their elements of Latin, science, history, music, at the age of thirteen or fourteen.† Nor were these scholars only from the country to which the university belonged. The higher universities, like Paris, Bologna, and Oxford, had such vast numbers of lads under their care, that, as a mere matter of

* The *Trivium* included Latin grammar, dialectic and rhetoric, the *Quadrivium* music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy. Ethics, metaphysics, and law and theology came later.

† The Theodosian Code forbade youths to remain at school after twenty. Early Oxford Registers furnish instances of the M.A. degree taken at the age of eighteen. John Donne, afterwards Dean of St. Paul's, entered Oxford at ten, and removed to Cambridge at thirteen (Walton, *Life*).

EARLY BOYHOOD

police, they divided them into four or more "nations," according to their birthplace. So, at Paris, there were four of these groups, those of France, England, Normandy and Picardy, the first including, besides the archiepiscopal provinces of Paris, Sens, Rheims and Bourges, all scholars from other parts of France and from Italy (*Lacroix*, p. 7; *Denifle*, i. 85-106). I could not reject a tradition that Dante studied from fourteen to seventeen at Bologna or Padua, or even at Paris or Oxford (as reported by Giov. da Serravalle in the Preface to his Latin translation of the *Commedia*), on the ground that it was improbable. And the manifold traces of travels in that direction, by the Riviera (*Purg.* iii. 49), through Arles (*H.* ix. 112), up the Rhone (*H.* ix. 112; *Par.* vi. 60, viii. 59), across to the Rhine (*H.* xvii. 21), the allusions to Cologne (*H.* xxiii. 63), Bruges, Wissant (*H.* xv. 4 n.), a port which no one would visit except as a place of embarkation for England, and the Thames (*H.* xii. 120), must be allowed, I think, in spite of a scepticism like Bartoli's (48-52, 111-220), which would refuse to see any evidence of Byron's

THE LIFE OF DANTE

travels in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, to give some plausibility to the conjecture that, at some time or other, he had been at both the two Universities which I have placed last in order. As regards Bologna, then specially famous for its lectures on Aristotle and the Canon Law, the case is still stronger. He knows all about its localities, as in the "*salse*" of *H.* xviii. 51, all about its dialects, as in the *V. E.* i. 15, all about its professors (*H.* xv. 110) and its leading families (*H.* xxiii. 103, 142; *Purg.* xiv. 100). Brunetto, it may be added, as a French scholar who had himself studied at Paris, would be likely to recommend it to so promising a pupil, and it would be quite after the manner of the time for five or six such students to start in company under the guidance of some older scholar, journeying on foot.* It was, I surmise, on his return from one of these absences that Dante heard

* The intimate business relations of the banking families of Florence with both France and England, where they collected first-fruits and annates for the Pope, and tithes and rents from livings held by Italian ecclesiastics, would obviously give facilities for such journeys. Prominent among the bankers who were engaged in such transactions in England were the Bardi. Comp. p. 48 n.

EARLY BOYHOOD

of that which was the second turning-point of his life, the marriage of Beatrice to Simon de' Bardi.

A young man, with tastes and powers such as we have seen, could scarcely fail to be interested in the political events which were passing round him, and I note accordingly the most conspicuous of those which are recorded during the first eighteen years of his life, and to which we find him referring in the *Commedia*.

1266. Battle of Benevento and death of Manfred (*Purg.* iii. 112); the Guelphs return to Florence (*H.* x. 50).

The two Frati Gaudenti of *H.* xxiii.

105 persecute the Ghibellines of Florence, specially the Uberti. Exile of the Ghibellines. Gianni Soldanieri takes a prominent part (*H.* xxxii. 121).

Niccolo Pisano begins the Church of the Dominicans at Bologna, and the pulpit of the Cathedral of Siena.

1267. The Uberti excluded from the general amnesty (*H.* x. 83).

THE LIFE OF DANTE

1268. Defeat and death of Conradin (*H.* xxviii. 16 ; *Purg.* xx. 67).

1270. Cino of Pistoia *b.* (Guittoncino de' Sinibuldi), (*V. E.* ii. 2).

Murder of Henry, son of Richard of Cornwall, by Guy de Montfort, at Viterbo (*H.* xii. 119).

1273. Gregory X. meets Charles of Anjou and Baldwin II. at Florence; endeavours to reconcile the Guelphs and Ghibellines, fails, and places the city under an interdict (1273-1276).

Rodolph of Hapsburg elected Emperor.

Ghibellines of Florence recalled by Gregory X., exiled again 1275, return 1279.

1274. March 7. Death of S. Thomas Aquinas (*Purg.* xx. 69 ; *Par.* x. 98).

May 1. Dante's first sight of Beatrice (*Purg.* xii. 110). Adam of Brescia executed for false coining.

Death of S. Bonaventura (*Par.* xii. 127).

Death of Pier della Broccia (*Purg.* vi. 19).

EARLY BOYHOOD

1274. Michael Zanche (*H.* xxii. 88 ; xxxiii. 114).

1276. Guido Guinicelli *d.* (*Purg.* xi. 94).

1277. Nicholas III. elected Pope (*H.* xix. 3).

1278. Ottocar, King of Bohemia, *d.* (*Purg.* vii. 57).

Nicolo Pisano *d.*

Campo Santo at Pisa begun by Giovanni Pisano.

First stone of S. Maria Novella laid,
Oct. 18.

1279. Albert the Great *d.* (*Par.* x. 98).

Adam of Brescia burnt alive (*H.* xxx. 63).

1281. Sordello *d.* (*Purg.* vi. 58).

French defeated at Forli by Count
Guido da Montefeltro (*H.* xxvii. 43).

1282. March 31. Sicilian Vespers (*Par.* viii. 73 ; *Sonn.* X. viii. 8 *n.* ; *Canz.* iv. 42).

June 13. Institution of Priori as
magistrates of Florence replacing
the fourteen Signori. Change demo-
cratic in tendency.

THE VITA NUOVA

ÆT. 18-25.

A.D. 1283-1290.

THE social habits of Florence did not admit of much intercourse between boys and girls of the upper classes. The former, as we have seen, had their work at the Abbey school, or were sent to carry on that work at one of the rising universities in Italy or France. The latter led a secluded life at home, or were sent to a convent school. And so it was that during the nine years that followed that first vision of beauty which transformed the boy's life, he and Beatrice never exchanged a word (*V. N.* c. 3). If he saw her at all, it was only at church, and there also the girls, as was customary throughout Europe in the Middle Ages, were separated from the boys, women from men. The memory of that vision, however, could scarcely be unfruitful in natural

THE LIFE OF DANTE

hopes, which the impulses of adolescence would as naturally strengthen. Those hopes were, as we know, destined to disappointment. It was, as I have said, probably on his return for one of the university vacations that he learned that his Beatrice had been given to another. Folco dei Portinari had looked out for a suitable marriage for his daughter, and had fixed on Simon de' Bardi, a member of the banking families of Florence, having France and England for his chief field of operations,* lending money to nobles, collecting the Pope's annates, first-fruits, and the like (*Frat. V. D.* 114), and personally able to settle a handsome dowry. Of that marriage Dante never speaks. The husband is for him simply as though he had not been. In all probability, however, the blow fell much more lightly than it would do in the present day on an ardent young lover who should see the lady of his

* The register of Bishop Droghensford of Bath and Wells, 1309-1329 (fo. 72), shows that the Bardi were employed to collect the tithe for six years levied by Clement V. for the crusade contemplated by Henry VII. They are described as the "*societas Bardorum*," or, in another document, as "*nos chers marchands de la compaignie des Bardi*" (*Wells Cath. MSS.* p. 300).

THE VITA NUOVA

dreams wedded to an opulent rival. Marriage had hardly as yet come to be regarded as the natural close of sentimental passion. The system of "courtly love" was in full force; and, strange as it may seem to our modern notions, the most fervid protestations of devotion could be addressed without a hint of scandal, and equally without "ulterior intentions," by a poet to the lady of his choice. Dante's great distinction is to have converted this half-fantastic, half-conventional passion into a prelude to and symbol of the highest pursuit with which the soul of man can concern itself.

In any case, he made up his mind to accept the inevitable in silence. "Concealment" might eat "like a worm i' the bud" into the opening blossom of his life, but the world should know nothing of his sorrow. And there was, at least, some compensation. The married women of Florence had a greater freedom of action than the unmarried. When he first met Beatrice after her marriage (see the notes on *Sonn.* 1), in company with two elder friends—that she was with them is perhaps an indication of the timidity of the young bride—she could

THE LIFE OF DANTE

give him the friendly greeting—the *salute*, in both senses of the word, on which Dante harps (*V. N. c. 3, 11, 18*), and the smile, which would before have been thought unmaidenly. Till then he had never heard words spoken by her lips, nor seen on them a smile meant for him. The effect was to revive the memory, now nine years old, into a resurrection life of new intensity, at once of joy and bitterness. Now, however, there was the mitigation of pain which poets of the first order know, and he could give vent at once to the sorrow of his soul by utterance.

I have entered so fully into the sequence and significance of the poems of the *Vita Nuova*, that it is unnecessary now to go through the strange introspective analysis which they reveal. It will be enough to recall how Dante sought to conceal his passionate devotion; how he dreamt for a moment of what life might have been had there been no necessity for concealment (*Sonn. 2*); how, to avoid the whispered comments of her friends, he pretended that another, and not Beatrice, was the object of his homage (*V. N. c. 9*); how that artifice

THE VITA NUOVA

brought about its natural result, and led Beatrice to look on him with displeasure for what appeared disloyalty; how he mourned over the death of one of her friends, and, as I surmise, glorified her memory, as he afterwards glorified Beatrice herself, by making her the Matilda of his earthly Paradise, that the two friends who had been lovely and pleasant in their lives might not be divided in their death (*V. N.* c. 8; *Purg.* xxviii. 40 *n.*); how he shared the sorrow of his beloved one when her father died (*V. N.* c. 22); how he felt her influence to be purifying and ennobling, filling his soul with a universal charity like her own (*V. N.* c. 21, 26, 27); how the nerves of the body sympathised with the overwrought tension of mind and spirit, and he became subject to fainting fits and sharp fevered pain, and dimmed and inflamed eyes, so that the shadow of death seemed to fall on him (*H.* xxvi. 7; *Purg.* ix. 16-18); how in that shadow of the valley he heard a voice that told him that Beatrice must die, and saw her funeral rites in visions of the early morn, when dreams are true (*V. N.* c. 23); how too soon the prophetic vision was

THE LIFE OF DANTE

fulfilled, and the horror of great darkness fell upon him, and Beatrice was taken where the angels, who had long desired her presence, dwell in peace (*V. N.* c. 29-31), and he was left, as it seemed, inconsolable, after seven years of that time of great joy, and also of great pain, to the long sorrow of a "widowed life" (*Conv.* ii. 2). One mysterious consolation there was, indeed, connected with her death which he treasured up in silence, that a stranger might not intermeddle with the joy of the heart which knew too keenly its own bitterness. What it was, we can only conjecture. Had she said or done something, as she was dying, which he could not repeat without seeming to praise himself (*V. N.* c. 29)? Had she, we ask, sent him a message to say that she had all along appreciated the purity of his love, and would pray for him to St. Mary and St. Lucia (her parish church in the *Via de' Bardi* was dedicated to the latter), behind the veil, as she had done on earth?

For a like reason, I do not enter here, with any fulness, into the question of the ethical bearings of the relation which we have traced,

THE VITA NUOVA

and refer to my notes on the Sonnets which I have mentioned. To us that relation seems perilous, tending to crime, if not actually criminal, certain to end in a scandal or a tragedy, in the *cause célèbre* of the Divorce Court, or the Assizes. If those dangers are avoided, then we think, with the half-amused, half-scornful feeling which we find in English travellers in Italy in the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries, of the strange family party, consisting of the husband, the wife, and the *cicisbeo* or *cavaliere servente* of the "fribble" or "tame-cat" type, dancing attendance, fetching and carrying; and we wonder which of the two men is the most contemptible. The latter of those two names, however, might remind us that what we scorn is the degenerate copy of a noble ideal. The highest thought of chivalry, the leading idea of the Provençal poetry which Dante had studied, was that the service of the lover was an unselfish service, that he admired and loved his fair one because she was fair, her visible beauty having power to purify and strengthen. It was enough for him to have a kindly word;—a smile of praise

THE LIFE OF DANTE

raised him to the seventh heaven. He was willing, for her sake, to encounter dangers and do noble deeds; to die even, if his death would help her. To those years, accordingly, Dante looked back, in the hour of keenest self-accusing introspection, with no feeling of reproach or shame (*Purg.* xxx. 121-123). They were for him a *Vita Nuova*, a new and higher life* than he had known before or than he knew afterwards, till he re-entered on it in its transfigured completeness.

We must remember, however, that there was another life running on side by side with this. No man can spend seven years of life at that stage of growth in sighs and sonnets. The sonnets themselves opened the way to the fame, which, as the fact that he sent the first of them to the friends who shared his tastes shows was, even then, not absent from his thoughts. Gradually he became known as the rising poet of the time, and *Dante d' Aldighiero poeta* was thought a sufficient description

* I adopt this meaning rather than that of simply "youth" or "early manhood" which has been accepted by many commentators.

THE VITA NUOVA

when he was formally registered in 1295 as a member of the Guild of Physicians and Apothecaries. One indication of the repute thus gained is seen in the fact that the young man, then probably not more than twenty-four, was painted, it is said, by Giotto, in the Bargello fresco, side by side with Latini and Corso Donati. That portrait may help us to understand the young Dante as the plaster cast of Ravenna helps us to understand the old. That face of deep, rather than passionate emotion, of indomitable will, with its possibilities of intense pride and intense lowliness, its dreaminess and pathos, reveals the man as he was before the harder discipline of his life began. For the present, however, the brighter aspect of that life had play. The sportive spirit of *S. 2* was, at least in some measure, the reflexion of his life. Falconry, painting, music, had each its several attractions. The *festas* of Easter, Epiphany, All Saints' Day (*Sonn.* 19), were days much to be remembered. It was emphatically the brightest time that Florence had ever known. There were Courts of Love (*Faur.* i. 299; *Malisp.* c. 237), and parties of

THE LIFE OF DANTE

fair ladies and knightly youths, artists, poets, musicians, in Fiesole or Vallombrosa (*Purg.* xxix. 4 n.), gatherings at marriage-feasts or funerals (*V. N.* c. 8, 9, 14). The old studies in Virgil, Lucan, Ovid, Statius were still carried on. The poems of Sordello, Daniel, Guinicelli, the Arthurian legends, and those of Charlemagne and his peers, the Vulgate and the Service Books of the Latin Church, all took their turn. He passed from the epitome of Universal Knowledge to be found in Brunetto's *Trésor*, and studied his history in Orosius, his natural history in Pliny, his astronomy in Ptolemy. His social reputation was secured. One who could write a poem (the *serventese* of *V. N.* c. 6) on the sixty who were chief among the belles of Florence must have lived in what we should call the "upper circles" of its society (*V. N.* c. 14, 18). It was not strange that, when Charles Martel, son of Charles II. of Naples, passed through Florence a year before Beatrice's death (1289), on his way from Spain with his father, the two young men should have attracted each the other; that Dante, always tending to

THE VITA NUOVA

idealise, should have seen in him the pattern of all princely grace and virtue, and placed him in Paradise, and, like Cunizza, in the sphere of Venus, as specially appropriate to his character; that here also (*Par.* viii. 49-57) the thought of what might have been, how infinitely brighter and happier, had the chances and changes of life been other than they were, weighed on him, in later years, with an oppressive sadness. The month that followed Charles's visit was yet more important. The exiled Ghibellines had allied themselves with the citizens of Arezzo in the hope of forcing a return to Florence, and the Florentines, aided by Bologna, Lucca, and Pistoia, led out an army against them, of which Corso Donati and Vieri de' Cerchi, afterwards such bitter opponents, were the chief leaders. Dante, then twenty-four, fought at Campaldino on that memorable St. Barnabas' day (June 11, 1289) as a volunteer under Vieri (*Vill.* vii. 131; *D. C.* 1), and has described, in a fragment of a letter given by Leonardo Bruni, the nervous thrill of excitement, if not of fear (*temenza molta*), with which he entered into the battle,

THE LIFE OF DANTE

and the corresponding joy of victory. Fighting on the same side with him was one of the brothers of Francesca of Rimini. Fighting on the other was the Buonconte, whose body could not be found after the battle, and for whom Dante creates the ideal death-scene of *Purg.* v. 88–129. In the September of the same year Dante took part with his fellow-citizens in the capture of Caprona (*H.* xxi. 96). And as if that year were to remain for ever with more vivid memories for himself and for mankind than most, we note that March 12th had witnessed the death of Ugolino, that September 4th witnessed that of Francesca.

A few other facts, in which Dante must have been interested, may be noted from *Ferr. M. D.* ii., in chronological order.

1284. Loggia of Or S. Michele built by Arnolfo.

June 5. Charles II. of Naples defeated and taken prisoner by the admiral of Peter III. of Arragon.

Aug. 6. Genoese defeat Pisans in the battle of Meloria.

Accession of Philip the Fair of France.

THE VITA NUOVA

1285. Large expansion of Florence under the direction of Arnolfo. Spectacles invented by Salvino Armati of Florence.
1287. Slavery abolished by the Commune of Florence. Cunizza, it may be noted, had given freedom to her slaves (*qu. serfs*), in 1265, by a deed of which Guido Cavalcanti's father was one of the witnesses, and which was executed in his house.
1288. Death of Folco de' Portinari, June 23, after founding an hospital in Florence for the sick poor (*V. N. c. 22*).
1290. First stone of Cathedral of Orvieto laid by Nicolas III.
- .

MARRIED AND PUBLIC LIFE

ÆT. 25-31.

A.D. 1290-1301.

LIFE has to be lived and work done even under conditions like that of the sorrow which fell on Dante with Beatrice's death. That sorrow had seemed inconsolable, and he had given vent to his grief in a letter opening with the words of Lament. i. 1, *Quomodo sedet sola civitas*, addressed to the chief citizens of Florence,* and in a *canzone* and a sonnet, the latter written at the request of Beatrice's brother. So a year passed away, a time of sorrow, perhaps also of study, or of sensual recklessness as a reaction against the sorrow,

* *A' principi della terra*. Translators and commentators have made merry, with their "shallow wit," over the young lover writing to "all the princes of the earth" about the death of his mistress. Dante, however, constantly uses *terra* for "city," specially for Florence, *H.* viii. 77, 130, ix. 104, xvi. 9, 58, and *principe* for "chief" or "leader" (*Par.* xi. 35). He was only doing as he had done at the opening of

THE LIFE OF DANTE

and on the anniversary of her death he was drawing outlines of angels, which reminded him of her, and led to another sonnet (*V. N.* c. 35). Consolation, however, came, and that in two distinct forms. As he was plunged in grief he saw a gentle lady, whose face reminded him of his lost one, watching him with looks of pity (*V. N.* c. 30). He gazed on her with glowing affection, though not without self-reproach, and violent oscillations of emotion. In that inner conflict a vision of the glorified Beatrice came to recall him to his fidelity (*V. N.* c. 40; *Purg.* xxx. 134), and not long afterwards another yet more wonderful, which made him resolve to write no more of his beloved one till he could write worthily of her, and so he held his peace in the hope of one day saying of her what had never yet been said of woman (*V. N.* c. 43). As he

his career as a poet, probably on a somewhat wider scale, justified by his increasing fame. The position of Beatrice's husband as one of the *millionaires* of Florence, to say nothing of the celebrity she had gained through Dante's homage, must have made her one of the leaders of society, and justified such a tribute to her memory. It was, so to speak, his funeral sermon, his threnody, in her honour.

MARRIED AND PUBLIC LIFE

brooded over the *In exitu Israel de Ægypto* which had been chanted at her funeral (*Purg.* ii. 46 n.), the words had become pregnant with new meanings, which fell in with the new half-defined resolve. In that resolve we trace, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the germ of the *Commedia*.

In the *Convito*, however (ii. 13), written at least in part after his exile, the retrospect of this period of Dante's life is presented in a different form. In the depth of his sorrow he turned to a book, Boethius *de Consolatione Philosophiæ*, the title of which promised comfort. In his grief over what had been a passionate friendship, rather than the common love of man for woman, he turned to Cicero *de Amicitia*. He was led by what he found there to go deeper into the study of the philosophy in which the writers of those books had found so medicinal a power. He pictured philosophy to himself, as Boethius and others had done before him, as a woman of exceeding beauty, the "daughter of the great Emperor of the Universe." He persuaded himself and announced to others that she was the "gentle

THE LIFE OF DANTE

lady" of the *Vita Nuova* who had had compassion on him ; that the poems addressed to that lady were odes to philosophy ; and that her bright beaming eyes were the lucid demonstrations of the higher metaphysics (*Conv.* ii. 13, iii. 11). The contrast between the two statements has naturally enough been the parent of a far-reaching scepticism. If, it has been urged, a tale told with so much circumstance as this is resolved into thin air, what guarantee have we that the equally circumstantial narratives of which Beatrice is the centre are not equally shadowy and unsubstantial (*Bart.* v. pp. 55-81)? May not she also be simply a symbol of theology, or of the ideal of the Empire, or an anti-Christian Goddess of Reason, or a mystic, gnostic, Albigensian heresy, or what you will? The answer to that reasoning, however, is not far to seek, and is found in Dante's own character, in his own words. His whole mind was pervaded, as in *Conv.* ii. 1, *Ep.* xi. c. 11, by the mediæval law of the fourfold interpretation of Scripture. For that dreamy, subtle, rapidly-moving mind of his, not Scripture only, but every event in his own life, was at once literal

MARRIED AND PUBLIC LIFE

and allegorical and moral and anagogic or mystical, and any one of the three latter might, for a time, relegate the first to so remote a distance that it was as though it had not been.* In the early years of exile, in his lonely wanderings, when the heart was knowing its own bitterness, when he looked back on the past, the incidents and actors of the *V. N.* may well have seemed to him "such stuff as dreams are made of." He had long been learning to think of Beatrice in Paradise as the impersonation of Divine Wisdom. That was the *raison d'être* of the great poem for which he was already working. Her friend had become, as Matilda, the type of cheerful activity. And so, as he looked back on those days of the "gentle lady" and her sympathy, and remembered how they had synchronised with the widening thoughts which began with Boethius and Cicero, and passed on to Aristotle and Averrhoes, he could see, behind the veil of fact, that she had been as the Philosophy which for a time had given him strength

* Giov. da Serravalle is not far from the truth when he sums up the case thus quaintly: "*Dante dilexit hanc puellam Beatricem historice et literaliter, sed allegorice, sacram Theologiam.*"

THE LIFE OF DANTE

and comfort. The literal and the allegoric melted into each other like dissolving views. Add to this that he sought to establish his reputation at once as a poet and a 'master of those who know' by what was to have been the colossal encyclopædia, of which we have but the *torso* in the *Conv.*, that he thought that simply amatory poems to a flesh and blood *pargoletta* would have been out of place in such a work, and that he felt perhaps, as other poets have done, a half-malicious pleasure in mystifying the Philistines of his own and after times, and we have the key to the apparent paradox. The *V. N.* gives us, thus viewed, what was literally true. Few readers, I believe, always excepting the monomaniacs of adventurous hypotheses, can read the narrative and the poems without feeling that the latter grew out of the actual experience of the former. What came as the non-natural, *i.e.* allegorical, interpretation was the after-thought of later years (*Witte, L. G.* ii. 42; *Krafft, L. G.* pp. 488-513).

Both in the letter and in its allegorical meaning, Dante looked back, towards the close of his life, on this period as a time of moral and

MARRIED AND PUBLIC LIFE

spiritual declension. He had been unfaithful to his first human love in transferring the homage of his affections to the "gentle lady," perhaps to other women also, as the *pargoletta*, whom Beatrice names in her indictment (*Purg.* xxxi. 59). He had been unfaithful to Divine Wisdom, the true theology of revealed Truth, of which she was the symbolic embodiment, when he turned to the other "*pargoletta*" (*S.* 35) of a merely human philosophy (*Purg.* xxxiii. 85-90). Boethius, though nominally a Christian, was emphatically a non-Christian writer. The Ethics of Aristotle, and the Physics and Metaphysics of Averrhoes, led him, it might be, to the four cardinal virtues of the Greek moralists, but not to the three supernatural graces of Faith, Hope, and Charity, or Love (*Purg.* i. 23, xxxi. 103-111). He had forsaken the "fountain of living waters," and turned, for comfort and refreshment, to the "broken cisterns" that would "hold no water."

For a time, however, we have to follow the outer, and not the inner life. Comparing *V. N.* c. 35 with *Conv.* ii. 13, it would seem that the first two years and a half after Beatrice's death

THE LIFE OF DANTE

on June 9, 1290, were spent in the philosophical studies of which I have spoken. It is probable enough that these were pursued at Bologna or Padua, the former being in high repute for the eminence of its lecturers on Aristotle and on the Civil Law. Francis, son of Accorso, mentioned in *H.* xv. 110, as involved in the same condemnation with Brunetto, was one of the most conspicuous, while the poet Onesto, named by Dante as one of the early masters of Italian poetry and prose, would present himself as a pattern in other forms of culture (*V. E.* i. 15). Here also he may have met Luitpold, afterwards Bishop of Bebenburg, one of the counsellors of Baldwin, Archbishop of Treves, the younger brother of Henry VII., who wrote a treatise, presumably on the same lines as the *De Monarchiâ*, with the title *De Regno et Imperio* (*Irmer*, p. 5). Nor were there wanting at Florence men who would attract the student by their width of knowledge in regions which his omnivorous intellect sought to explore, and in which he became a master. There was in his immediate neighbourhood Giovanni Villani, the historian. There was

MARRIED AND PUBLIC LIFE

Taddeo, the great physician, the student of Hippocrates, the translator of Aristotle into Latin (*Par.* xii. 83; *Conv.* i. 10). There was Salvino degli Armati, great in the study of optics and experiments with lenses, mastering the laws of reflection and refraction, on which Dante delighted to dwell (*Par.* ii. 94-105), and famous as the inventor of spectacles* (*Ferr. M. D.* ii. 20), probably therefore welcomed by the poet, whose habits of study and brain excitement had affected his sight and confined him for many weeks to the seclusion of a darkened room (*V. N.* c. 40; *Conv.* iii. 9).† Brunetto, too, was still alive (*d.* 1294), though one thinks at this time the mask of the sensualist had fallen off, and that Dante would look

* Spectacles appear, it will be remembered, in the works of the early Italian painters, as *e.g.* in Ghirlandajo's "Burial of St. Francis." Roger Bacon, however, mentions them as already in use in his time (*Op. Mag.* p. 377), and the Italian optician may possibly have owed his invention to what he heard from Dante of the latest teaching in physical science. Curiously enough, the then Bishop of Florence was also conspicuously short-sighted (*D. C.* i. p. 232).

† St. Lucia, it may be noted, was the patron saint to whom those who thus suffered naturally turned for help. Here, as I have noted on *H.* ii. 97, we have another link connecting her with Beatrice and Dante.

THE LIFE OF DANTE

on him with a saddened horror rather than with the earlier admiration. Gian della Bella and Dino Compagni could scarcely fail to be in some measure known to him. Guido Cavalcanti, who had married a daughter of Farinata degli Uberti, and to whom Dante dedicated his *Vita Nuova*, was still foremost among his friends.

In the *Convito*, however (ii. 13), there is a significant passage which may indicate that Dante's mind at this time passed through oscillations of feeling which were natural to one who had suffered so much, and who had not yet found the haven where he would be. He says that he sought for wisdom not only in "the disputations of those who philosophised," but also "in the schools of the religious"; and, as the word was then used, that term could only refer to the members of the religious orders, the Dominicans and Franciscans, who were then both preaching and lecturing, making converts and scholars, in well-nigh every university in Europe. With that fact we may connect a very early traditional interpretation of *H.* xvi. 106 (*Buti* in the 14th century),

MARRIED AND PUBLIC LIFE

which sees in the "cord" with which the poet had girt himself to contend against the leopard (the symbol of the desire of the flesh and the pride of life), an allusion to his having, at one time, been drawn to connect himself with the Franciscan brotherhood, as a member of the Tertiary Order. The members of that Order were left free to engage in the business of the world and to keep the stations which they occupied in it (Elizabeth of Hungary and her husband, *e.g.* were Tertiaries), and were, in fact, lay brothers, wearing the cord, but pledged only to lives of purity and devotion. An apparently independent tradition reports that he was buried, by his own desire, in the dress of the Tertiary Order. There is, then, perhaps, sufficient ground for assuming, as at least possible, that Dante was, at one time, in this *sturm und drang* period of his life, drawn to the Franciscan Order. The manifest devotion with which he tells the story of St. Francis in *Par.* xi. implies an almost passionate admiration. Combine with these facts his acquaintance with the Umbrian regions which had been the scene of the Saint's early life and triumphs,

THE LIFE OF DANTE

with Perugia and Assisi (*Par.* xi. 43-54), and his probable presence with his friend Giotto in the latter city when the artist was painting the frescoes of the great Franciscan church there. Note the singularly Dantesque symbolism of those frescoes, the Tower of Chastity with her true servants driving off the blind Cupid with his arrows, emblem of sensual love, into the abyss, and two figures approaching (on the left-hand side of the painting) as the last-arrived novices, in one of which, if I mistake not, we may find the familiar form, features, but slightly aged, and head-dress which we see in the Bargello portrait, the wedding of the Saint with Poverty (*Par.* xi. 58-78). Observe the Centaur (*H.* xii. 56), cowed, in his brute strength, by the law of obedience, while Prudence (in its full Platonic sense as including all ethical wisdom) presents, after a Janus fashion, on one side her severity, and, on the other, her goodness*—and the conclusion is, I think, legitimate, as far as any conclusion from

* I write with the photographs of the frescoes before me. A full description will be found in Lindsay's *Chr. Art.*, ii. pp. 28-48. (Comp. *Purg.* xxx. 79-81, xxxii. 4.)

MARRIED AND PUBLIC LIFE

circumstantial evidence can be, that there was some link closely connecting one period of Dante's life with the influence of the Franciscan Order. The question which meets us is, then, where were the schools of the "religious" of that Order most in repute, and the answer is at Paris and at Oxford, and of the possible periods of his studying at those universities as reported by Giovanni da Serravalle and implied by Boccaccio, this seems to me the most probable. The former reports (*Pref. to Translation*), indeed,* that he performed all his exercises for the degree of Doctor of Theology at Paris, but had not sufficient money to pay the fees, and that, returning to Florence to obtain the funds required, he was afterwards hindered by his share in public affairs from ever completing his purpose. It will be admitted that *Par.* xxiv., xxv., xxvi. read very largely like a reminiscence of an actual examination of this character. Anyhow, we are reminded of the

* The MS. of this translation is now in the British Museum Library, and I quote from personal inspection. A MS. note in the fly-leaf states that, during his stay in London, Dante had lodgings in Cheapside, but I have not succeeded in finding the passage in Serravalle's text.

THE LIFE OF DANTE

description of him given in the epitaph ascribed to his friend Joannes de Virgilio (*Frat. V. D.* p. 318):—

“Dantes theologus, nullius dogmatis expers.”

At this period, then, or if not, at some earlier or later time, we have to think of Dante as a student in the Rue du Fouarre—the Haymarket of mediæval Paris—sitting with his fellows on the bundles of straw, which served as benches, hearing perhaps tales of Sigier, dead not long since, whose lectures roused the ill-will of bigots because they were felt to be conclusive (*Par. x. 136*), perhaps extending his travels, as Serravalle and Boccaccio say, to the Thames, London, Westminster Abbey, and Oxford, drawn thither by the scientific reputation which Roger Bacon, then in the closing years of his life, had left behind him at Paris, where he also had taught, like Sigier, *invidiosi veri*, and had come under like suspicions (*Charles, Rog. Bac. p. 37*).*

* Bardi's English business connexions (p. 48 n.) would facilitate such an expedition. There are passages in the *Comm.* which at least suggest travels beyond London and Oxford (*Par. x. 139 n.*; *Purg. xxxiii. 76 n.*). It may be

MARRIED AND PUBLIC LIFE

I return to more certain ground in his marriage with Gemma Donati in 1292, month uncertain. It was, as Boccaccio tells the tale (and he knew Dante's nephew well), a marriage made for him by his friends. There seems at most but slender ground for the conjecture of Sir Theodore Martin and Fraticelli that Gemma was the "gentle lady" who had looked on his sorrow with a comforting compassion, and that she married him knowing the history of his love for Beatrice. If she had been, it is probable that he would have given some hint of the fact, probable also that the marriage would have been a happier one. The hypothesis seems to have too much the nature of a novel, presenting to us the character of

noted that Fazio degli Uberti (grandson of Farinata) in his *Dittamondo*, a poem of the fourteenth century, names the scenes of the Arthurian legends,—Guenevere's Tower, Merlin's Cave, and Camelot—as things that every traveller ought to see, and Camelot=South Cadbury, in Somerset. I may seem to be unduly influenced by local prepossessions, but to me it does not seem an incredible hypothesis that when Dante was in England, he may have been attracted by the fame of Peter Lightfoot, the maker of the clock, to visit Glastonbury (the Isle of Avalon, the burial-place of Arthur), and may have worshipped within the walls of my own Cathedral.

THE LIFE OF DANTE

an irreproachable "Dante-Grandison." What seems likely is, that his friends were anxious about his physical and mental health, his negligent and Bohemian habits. It is curious that *Bocc. (V. D.)* notes that his wearing a beard (*Purg. xxxi. 68 n.*) was one of the chief symptoms of those habits. What he wanted, they thought, as a cure for his half-hysterical emotions, was a wife who would keep him steady and bring him back to conventionalities. Of the life, age, character, looks of the lady they chose, we know next to nothing. Dante never mentions her, unless she be the "*donna gentile*," in prose or verse, and seems to have made no effort to see her after his banishment from Florence. Boccaccio describes her as a shrew, a Xanthippe whose husband was *not* a Socrates. We are left, if we follow him and the *servum pecus* of writers whom he led, to picture to ourselves a wretched home, the wife nagging at a husband whom she could not understand, the husband finding solace in successive flirtations, or worse. One or two thoughts may be pleaded in arrest of judgment. Boccaccio is as little to be trusted in his

MARRIED AND PUBLIC LIFE

estimate of Dante as Athenæus in his estimate of Sophocles. It was just the kind of thing which such a writer, impure himself in thought, if not in life, would be certain to say. A railing accusation against marriage and women in general, and therefore in each particular instance, was entirely after his manner. It must at least be admitted that Dante's family of four children, born within seven years, is *prima facie* evidence that the husband and the wife were never even on the verge of separation. His intimacy with her kinsman Forese (*Purg.* xxiii. 48, 76), though he looked back on it with regret as a descent into a lower level of thought and life than the mark of his high calling, is, at least, presumptive proof that he was on good terms with his wife and her family. It is probable enough that she did not understand him, but if so, that was an infirmity which she shared with the greater part of the human race. And, from the time of her husband's exile, when the eldest was but eight, she was left with the sole charge of her children's education, and their after lives bore witness that she did that work well, and

THE LIFE OF DANTE

brought them up to honour the father from whom the disasters of the time had divided them. On the whole, then, I sum up in favour of the defendant. If the marriage did not present the high pattern of a serene harmony like that which we have known in the life of the Wordsworths, the Southneys, the Longfellows, and others, it at least stands out in marked contrast with that of other men of letters. Dante did not, like Milton, write treatises on the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce out of the bitterness of his own experience, nor, like Byron, pour a scathing invective on his wife in a licentious satire, nor, like Dickens, expose to public gaze the sorrows of a husband whose wife did not appreciate him as her sister did. It may have been a trial to Gemma to see him writing in the *Vita Nuova* the records of his past love, or to find poems dwelling on the beauty of a *pargoletta* (*B.* ix., *S.* xxxv.), and to be told that she was only philosophy, and that her "bright eyes" were "scientific demonstrations." There may have been differences of feeling rising out of the fact that Dante belonged

MARRIED AND PUBLIC LIFE

to one Florentine faction (the *Bianchi*) and the Donati to another (the *Neri*), but whatever those differences may have been, the husband had the wisdom to hide them beneath the veil of silence. It may be put to the credit of the wife that she acquiesced in their daughter being baptized with the name of Beatrice. Dante may, in like manner, be credited with the intention of including his wife, when he mourned over his exile (*Par.* xvii. 55), as involving separation from all that he held most dear. And as for the long continuance of that separation, it must be remembered that he had no home to offer her, that he could not rightly ask her to share the beggary of the lot which condemned him to eat the bread of others and mount their stairs (*Par.* xvii. 59), that she had to watch over the remnant of his fortunes, and to educate his children. Apart from the utterly untrustworthy statement of Boccaccio, the only evidence of the charges of sensual immorality brought against Dante are the facts (1) that he represents himself (*Purg.* xxvii. 46) as having to pass through the fire by which the souls of men are purified from that sin ; (2) that he places in

THE LIFE OF DANTE

Beatrice's lips the reproach that he has turned from her to "some girl of little worth" (*pargoletta*) (*Purg.* xxxi. 59); (3) that he refers in *Purg.* xxiv. 37 to a Gentucca, and in *Canz.* iii. viii. and the alleged letter to Moroello Malaspina (*Frat. O. M.* 430) to other women who had comforted him. In regard to (1) and (2), I note that a sensitive conscience acting in this region is specially likely to emphasize deviations from purity in thought as well as act, to dwell more than others on a single instance in which he had yielded to temptation; and as to (3), that a man like Dante was not likely to perpetuate the memory of an adulterous love to after ages, or to dwell upon it in a letter to a noble-minded friend; if indeed the letter be not a fabrication. I take the affection in these two cases to have been that of a pure friendship.

Anyhow the married life brought with it a certain measure of steadiness in pursuit and action. The poet recognised that he was also a citizen, that, as such, he had duties to perform, to find, as his philosophical studies had led him to seek, a logical basis for those duties

MARRIED AND PUBLIC LIFE

other than the traditional watchwords of the Guelphs and Ghibellines, or the new-born animosities of the Neri and Bianchi.* And so, over and above his work as a poet, which bore fruit in the sonnets and *canzoni* that find a place in the *Vita Nuova* and the *Convito*, and the studies which are represented by the list of names in *H.* iv. 136-144, in which we may almost see a catalogue of the student's library, he turned to the question what was the true ideal polity as regards the relations of Church and State, and he found the answer, afterwards embodied in the *De Monarchiâ*, in the position

* It may be worth while noting that the names were identified with local factions rather than political principles. Two branches of the family of Cancellieri of Pistoia had a quarrel, into the details of which it is unnecessary to enter. One was headed by a Bianco and took the name of Bianchi—the other, by way of distinction, called themselves Neri. The faction spread, through Pistoian fugitives, into Florence, and soon every family took one side or the other. Their reception was as fatal to the peace of that city as that of the prisoners of Sphacteria had been to Athens in the Peloponnesian War (*Thucyd.* iv. 41). Corso Donati was the acknowledged head of the Neri, Vieri dei Cerchi of the Bianchi. Ultimately the Bianchi combined with what remained of the old half-suppressed Ghibelline party, while the other, courting the favour of the Pope, boasted that they represented the old Guelph traditions of Florence.

THE LIFE OF DANTE

that each had its independent sphere of action, one leading to earthly and the other to heavenly completeness in human life, that each derives its authority from God, and within its sphere is supreme. His theory was therefore opposed alike to the Guelph principles of his fathers, so far as they represented what we have learnt to call the Ultramontanism of Gregory VII. and Innocent III. and to the democracy and plutocracy of Florence. It was equally opposed to the idea of the supremacy of the State over the Church in spiritual things which we have learnt to call Erastianism, and which had been asserted by the Emperors Henry IV. and Frederick II., and by Henry II. of England, which was to be asserted a few years later by Philip the Fair of France. It foreshadowed the teaching of Hooker (*Ec. Pol.* B. iii. and viii.) that the Church and the nation are, or ought to be, the same society, though each, for its own special function, is administered by different officers, or even that enunciated in Cavour's watchword of a "free Church in a free State." It was not an easy theory to work in the midst of all the manifold confusions of the time, and we cannot

MARRIED AND PUBLIC LIFE

wonder that before long Dante found it necessary, by way of protest against "the falsehood of extremes," to form a party by himself (*Par.* xvii. 69). If we wonder that he who laid so great a stress on the priceless value of liberty (*Purg.* i. 71) should have chosen an absolute autocracy as his ideal form of polity, what we have now to trace will show that he had seen enough of representative government to be sick of it.*

The state of Florence at the time when Dante entered on his life as a citizen was one of political agitation, caused in part, or at least aggravated, by commercial distress. In 1291 Acre had fallen before the arms of the Soldan of Babylon (*H.* xxvii. 89), and this had given a severe check to her Eastern traffic, and Philip of France, under the pretext of checking usury, had seized the persons and confiscated the property of the rich Florentines, who carried on the greater part of the commerce between France and Italy, and had establishments in

* [It should, however, be remembered that the existence of the Imperial supremacy as conceived by Dante, did not preclude the possibility of great variety in local or national politics.—ED.]

THE LIFE OF DANTE

both countries (*Ferr. M. D.* ii. p. 23). The change from a feudal aristocracy to one of wealth had been accomplished during the early part of the thirteenth century. The nobles of the city and its environs had to pull down their castles and come and live in the city. If they built houses there which had too military a character, they also were pulled down. The old forms of government, following in rapid succession by consuls, ancients, *Buonomini* (it would be profitless to go into the details which make the history of Florence like a chapter of Aristotle's *Politics*) had passed away. A final blow at feudalism was struck in 1282 by a law which limited all participation in the government of the city to those who had been enrolled in one of the seven Guilds of the greater Arts, which had created its wealth. The list of these arts is worth giving as showing the character of mediæval trade and manufacture. There were the seven greater arts—(1) Judges and notaries, (2) merchants of Calimala,* (3) money-changers, (4) wool-

* This is explained by Trollope (*Hist. of Florence*, i. 175) as meaning the art of dressing and dyeing cloth of foreign

MARRIED AND PUBLIC LIFE

staplers, (5) silk-merchants, (6) physicians and apothecaries, (7) furriers. Out of these were chosen the *Priori delle Arti*, at first three, then six, then twelve, who held office, with almost supreme authority (I avoid the complications of the councils that were intended as checks and balances), for two months at a time. In the list of second-class arts we find butchers, boot-makers, builders, stone-masons, and second-hand clothes dealers; in the third, vintners, inn-keepers, oilmen, tanners, armourers, leather-sellers, carpenters, locksmiths, and bakers.

In 1292, probably, as I have said, as the result of the commercial distress, there was another revolutionary change brought about by Gian della Bella, who stirred up the *plebs* by dwelling on the grievances to which they were still subject, and, as one of the *Priori*, with the help of his colleagues and the *Podestà* (a foreign magistrate who was supposed to be free from the influence of local factions),

manufacture. The Via Calimala (said to be *callis malus*, because leading to a house of ill-fame) in which the trade centred, still exists in modern Florence.

THE LIFE OF DANTE

Taddeo de' Bruxati of Brescia (who will meet us again in connexion with the history of his own city), and the Captain of the People, Currado da Soncino of Milan, passed his memorable Ordinances of Justice. Among these was one which had a notable influence on Dante's life. The law which confined public offices to members of the greater arts had been evaded by a merely nominal enrolment. It was now enacted that no one should be elected as Prior who was not actually carrying on business in the "art" of his Guild. Thirty-three of the noblest families were excluded by name even from that access to public life, and the list was soon increased to seventy-two. A Gonfaloniere of justice was appointed to carry these and other like enactments against the excesses of the nobles into execution, and he was intrusted with the command of a National Guard of 4000 men. Boxes were kept in the bureaus of the Gonfaloniere and Captain of the People for anonymous complaints against men of position (*Nap.* i. 345-351).

One result of this was that when Dante

MARRIED AND PUBLIC LIFE

resolved to take his part in public life, he had to qualify for one of these Guilds, and, as was natural in a student of natural science, he chose that of the Physicians and Apothecaries. It is not unlikely that admission to that Guild implied an examination. As has just been shown, it involved, in Dante's case, an actual practice in the profession. And of both studies and practice his works supply sufficient traces. His library contained Hippocrates and Galen and Dioscorides, probably also translations of the medical treatises of Avicenna and Averrhoes (*H.* iv. 139-143), possibly the writings of Jewish physicians, and those of the great medical school of Salerno. He became acquainted with the foulness of Italian hospitals (*H.* xxix. 46), with the symptoms of leprosy (*H.* xxix. 73-84), dropsy (*H.* xxx. 52-57), fever (*H.* xxx. 107), famine (*Purg.* xxiii. 49); looked with compassion on what is perhaps the most piteous of all sights, the frenzied delirium of a child (*Par.* i. 102). He studied his Aristotle on the mysteries of embryology (*Purg.* xxv. 37-72), and with them faced the question of the

THE LIFE OF DANTE

origin of the human soul, the theories of creation or transmission (*Purg.* xvi. 35-90). He learnt to pay special honour to the "beloved physician" who wrote the Acts of the Apostles (*Purg.* xxix. 137). But the apothecary's business in the thirteenth century was not confined to drugs. It included spices of all kinds, precious stones and jewels generally (*Frat. V. D.* p. 114), and the pigments used by artists, probably also surgical and optical instruments, such as the newly invented spectacles. In all these regions Dante speaks the language of an expert. We have the list of gems or pigments in *Purg.* vii. 73-75, allusions to pearls (*Par.* iii. 14), sapphires (*Purg.* i. 13; *Par.* xxiii. 101), emeralds (*Purg.* vii. 75, xxix. 125; *Par.* xxxi. 116), diamonds (*Purg.* ix. 105), porphyry (*Purg.* vii. 101). In all these things the Florentine apothecaries were, like those of Venice, Pisa, and Genoa, the channels of traffic between the East and West, between India and Persia on the one hand, France and England on the other.

As one of Gian della Bella's ordinances fixed thirty as the minimum age for admission to pub-

MARRIED AND PUBLIC LIFE

lic functions, Dante had to wait till 1295 (some biographers say till 1297) before his name was inscribed in the Register of the Guild of the *Speziali e Medici*. The fact that it was entered as that of *Dante Alighieri poeta Fiorentino*, shows that his literary reputation was by that time established. In 1296 and 1297 we find him taking part in the debates of the Council of the Captain of the People, otherwise known as that of the Hundred Counsellors, but the subject of the debate is not recorded (*Frat. V. D.* p. 135). In 1299 he had so acquired the confidence of his fellow-citizens as to be employed as an ambassador to the Commune of S. Gimignano to settle a dispute, into the details of which we need not enter. Of this embassy we have documentary evidence (*Frat. V. D.* p. 130). Others, reported by some writers (Filelfo, Balbo), to Siena, Genoa, Perugia, Venice, and the kings of Naples, France, and Hungary, if not altogether relegated to the region of the fabulous, must be looked on as very doubtful.

So the years passed on in study and action, political and professional, the great work of

THE LIFE OF DANTE

immortalising Beatrice being the goal to which much of his study of the language and literature of the several provinces of Italy, as in the *V. E.*, of the principles of polity, as in the *De Monarchiâ*, of knowledge in general, as in the *Convito*, were directed. To this period we may assign probably the composition of the *V. N.*, in part, perhaps, of the *Convito*, though neither that nor the *V. E.* was completed till after his exile. In 1300 we enter on a more critical period of his life. That year was memorable throughout Europe, and especially throughout Italy, for the celebration of the first Jubilee by Boniface VIII., who ascended the papal throne in 1294, after the abdication which, on the one hand, placed Celestine V. in the Calendar of Saints, and, on the other, consigned him to the perpetual infamy of "*il gran rifiuto*" (*H.* iii. 60). There is no direct evidence that Dante went to that jubilee as a pilgrim. On the other hand, the indirect circumstantial evidence is as strong as it can well be. He describes, with the vividness of an eye-witness, the ordered march of the visitors as they crossed the bridge of St. Angelo (*H.* xviii.

MARRIED AND PUBLIC LIFE

29), the awestruck wonder of pilgrims from a far country as they looked on the Holy Napkin of St. Veronica (*Par.* xxxi. 104), or gazed "at Rome and all her noble works" (*Par.* xxxi. 35) from the Piazza of St. John Lateran. He himself had felt, as he walked her streets, that the very stones of her walls called for a special reverence (*Conv.* iv. 5), and these indications fall in with the strong antecedent probability that such a keen observer would wish to be a sharer in what so affected the whole of Western Christendom, that it was reckoned that upwards of 200,000 foreigners were commonly in Rome during the whole period. I do not assume that he would be led to go by his feelings as a devout Catholic. It was precisely the period of his life when that element was weakest in it. I do not know how far back the proverb of the later *renaissance*,* "*Ubi tres medici, duo*

* The following passage from Massinger, quoted in Southey's *Doctor*, is suggestive as a comment on the proverb :—

"I have heard, how true
I know not, most physicians, as they grow
Greater in skill, grow less in their religion,
Attributing so much to natural causes
That they have little faith in that they cannot
Deliver reason for."

THE LIFE OF DANTE

athei," may be traced, but it was true in the thirteenth as in later centuries, that while, on the one hand, the study of natural science tended to emancipate men's minds from popular superstitions, it not seldom drifted into materialism, scepticism, Pantheism. And Dante was drifting with the current. He had substituted, as he tells us in the *Convito*, philosophy for faith, classical literature for the Vulgate and the Fathers, the dream of a "celestial Athens" where Stoics and Epicureans, Platonists and Aristotelians, might dwell together in unity (*Conv.* iii. 14) for the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the saints of God. With perhaps the *ne plus ultra* of allegorising interpretation, he finds in the three Maries who went to the sepulchre of the Christ types of the first three of those schools, all seeking the Christ, *i.e.*, true blessedness, in the grave of the world, in which they do not find it (*Conv.* iv. 22). The unbelief of some, at least, of his heroes and friends, Frederick II., Manfred, the Cavalcanti, had eaten into the freshness and fulness of his faith, and he found himself asking what need was there of

MARRIED AND PUBLIC LIFE

the Incarnation and the Passion? Were not the ways of God in the work of redemption and election unequal and unrighteous (*Par.* xix. 70-114)? The questions might go further, were miracles possible or credible (*Conv.* iii. 7)? was there a life after death? or were the "*subterranea regna*" to be classed among the dreams that "*vix pueri credunt*" (Juvenal, *Sat.* ii. 149)? It would not have been strange if he had heard debated in the schools of Paris or Oxford (*Mon. Franc.* p. 634), the more tremendous question, *Utrum sit Deus*. He had lost himself in the dark forest, and, though he saw a rose of dawn on the mountain summit, yet he was sore let and hindered in his attempt to climb. He had made shipwreck of his faith and was tossed to and fro in the deep waters (*H.* i. 22). From this misery he was, he tells us, delivered, and he fixes, with a precision of which the only natural explanation is that it represents a fact, the Holy Week and Easter of A.D. 1300 as the time of his deliverance. And he was then at Rome, probably for his first visit there. His first impressions were, we may well believe, as they

THE LIFE OF DANTE

have been those of thousands, a sense of shame and burning indignation at the greed and licence of the priesthood; the nepotism and simony of bishops (*H. xix.*); the ambition, love of power, inner dishonesty and unverity which he found in Boniface VIII. (*H. xix. 53, xxvii. 70*). But there was also the spell of what was even then the fateful city; there were the traditions of classical and Christian antiquity, the memories of Papal and Imperial greatness. Those memories stirred up the mind of his friend Villani, who was at Rome at the same time, to write, so far as in him lay, the history of the city which they owned as mother and which they so passionately loved (*Vill. viii. 36*).^{*} And Giotto was with him, painting the Pope (the picture now hangs in the Church of St. John Lateran) in the act of proclaiming the Jubilee, and the *Naviella*, which, having been the glory of the choir of

* The preface to my edition of Villani (*Trieste, 1852*) states that the two friends met at the tomb of the Apostles, and swore that they would each accomplish the works which they had severally planned. In the absence of a reference, I am compelled to set the statement down as belonging to the "romance of history."

MARRIED AND PUBLIC LIFE

the old St. Peter's, was transferred by Leo X. to the portico of the new, sharing in some at least of the poet's aspirations, embodying in his art-creations the suggestions of his teeming fancy. This then was the city of Julius and Augustus, in some sense, whatever their birth-place, of Virgil and Lucan, and Ovid and Statius, of St. Peter and St. Paul, of Linus and Anacletus, of the rise, decay, corruption of the Church of Christ. And it was Holy Week, and pilgrims were crowding the city for their great Easter communion.

At such a time, kindled by the contagion of their enthusiasm, memories of the past would, I conceive, rush in upon his mind, of Virgil as his guide to earthly wisdom, of St. Mary and St. Lucia as the objects of his boyhood's reverence, of the Matilda in whom he had seen the type of a life blessed and blessing others in the cheerfulness of its activity, of Beatrice, who had been also the symbol of a contemplative and devout holiness, who had been, while she lived, the guardian angel of his life, and of whom he loved to think as still watching over him, and inter-

THE LIFE OF DANTE

ceding for him. And with this there would be the remembrance of men and women whom he had known—of Brunetto, and Casella and Forese, and the elder Cavalcante, and Buonconte, and Cunizza, and Charles Martel; of others of whom he had read or heard, Frederick II. and Manfred, and Farinata, St. Francis, and St. Dominic. Where were they now? In what region of the unseen world did their spirits dwell apart, each receiving according as his work had been? And what would be his own state were the summons of death to come to him then and there? Had he not discovered life, as most men find it, to be a lie (*Purg.* xix. 106), the earthly goods, *denari o dignità* (*Conv.* i. 9), for which he and most men were striving to be as *vanitas vanitatum*? Can we not conceive of the solemn ritual of Holy Week as coming with a marvellous power to stir to the very depths a soul such as Dante's at such a crisis as this? If, according to the rule of the Western Church, he made his confession before that Easter Communion, and fell under the hands of some Franciscan expert, such as he, a

MARRIED AND PUBLIC LIFE

Tertiary, would naturally seek, skilled in dealing with the diseases of men's souls, would it not be as the unveiling of all secret things, leading to the cry for pardon and for peace, the craving for the twofold office of the keys of the Church's ministry (*Purg.* ix. 115-129)? Would not the *Vexilla regis prodeunt* of Passion Sunday lead to the question whether he had been serving under the true King or under the Lord of Hell (*H.* xxxiv. 1)? Would not the services for Good Friday and Easter Eve bring before his thoughts the descent into Hades, the "harrowing of Hell," the mysteries of the threefold regions behind the veil? When Easter Eve came, would not its anthems, *Collocavit me in obscuris, sicut mortuos sæculi*, and *Elevamini portæ æternales*, and its *Domine, abstraxisti ab inferis animam*, and *Factus sum sicut homo sine adjutorio, inter mortuos liber*, come to him with a new power, and the Holy Week lessons from the Lamentations of Jeremiah (already so familiar, *V. N.* 31) be something more than a wailing cry over a buried earthly love, and Easter with its *Sur-rexit de sepulchro Dominus*, its *Alleluia*, and its

THE LIFE OF DANTE

In exitu Israel de Ægypto (*Purg.* ii. 46), speak of a more than earthly deliverance from the house of bondage? This I take to have been the history of Dante's conversion, of the *genesis* into form and shape of the thought which the close of the *Vita Nuova* presents to us in its all but earliest germ, the conclusion of the second drama of the great Trilogy of his life. The third drama of the Trilogy is one of many acts.

CONFLICT AND DEFEAT

I HAVE shown that there is strong circumstantial evidence that Dante was at Rome in the early months of 1300. Starting with that probability as a provisional working hypothesis, it has the merit of throwing light on his subsequent political action. To understand that action one must go back to the time when Boniface VIII. first began to take part in the affairs of Florence. The recent researches of Guido Levi in the archives of the Vatican, published in the *Arch. della Soc. Rom. di Storia Patria*, vol. v., and reproduced by Bartoli (v. c. 6), throw a light on the transactions of that time for which I am bound to express my thankfulness to the latter, all the more because I have so often felt constrained to differ from him in his treatment of many questions connected with Dante's life and character. It will be remembered that Gian

THE LIFE OF DANTE

della Bella, after carrying his Ordinances of Justice, had withdrawn from Florence, under pressure from the nobles, in 1294. The revolutionary movement was, however, soon followed by a reaction, and the voluntary exile was turned into actual banishment. The reformer was condemned in his absence for contumacy, and died in France (*Vill.* viii. 8). In the same year Boniface ascended the Papal throne, and soon saw in the divisions of Florence an opening for extending his power. The first trace of his interference is a Bull dated January 23, 1296, addressed to the Commune, denouncing Gian della Bella in strong terms as the author of strife, and forbidding, under pain of excommunication, any attempt to recall him. The prohibition backed the policy of the aristocrats and plutocrats of Florence, whatever might have been their origin, and Dante's sympathies, as the whole tone of the *Mon.* (i. 14) and the *Conv.* (iv. 14, 27) shows, were with personal merit as against the claims of either the ancestral or the moneyed nobility. The charm of his ideal Empire was that it implied equality and

CONFLICT AND DEFEAT

fraternity, if not an absolute liberty, in its subjects. The Bull so far attained its end that Gian della Bella was not recalled. Early in 1300 we find three citizens of Florence, among them the Lapo Salterello of *Par.* xv. 128, then, in May, one of the Priori, accusing three Florentine citizens, then at Rome, of plotting against the freedom of their city. As Lapo was afterwards included in the same sentence of banishment with Dante (*D. C.* p. 173), it may be inferred that he was opposed to Donati and the Pope, and that the three Florentines at Rome were suspected of favouring the Pope's projects. They were condemned to pay large fines. The Pope at once wrote to the Signoria of Florence demanding that the judgment should be quashed. The accusation was aimed at him—even him. Other letters followed in April 24 and May 24 to the Bishop of Florence (*Bart., ut supra*). Boniface denounces Lapo for not recognising his supreme authority as the Vicar of Christ in things temporal as well as spiritual. His is the final court of appeal. He cites Lapo and six others to appear before him at Rome, to be judged

THE LIFE OF DANTE

according to their deserts. In the interval between these two letters he had written to the Duke of Saxony, as Elector of the Empire, to use his influence with Albert of Austria to bring about the restoration of the rebellious city to full submission to the Holy See (*ibid.*).

I assume that these facts were known, wholly or in part, to Dante when he was at Rome in the April and May of 1300, and that he determined, as far as lay in his power, to oppose the Pope's intrigues. He hastened back to Florence, and was appointed by the electoral body, including the outgoing Priori, of whom Salterello was one, as one of their successors, to hold office from June 15 to August 15. His colleagues were men altogether unknown and of no weight, and he was master of the situation. To that period he looked back in after years as the beginning of all the trouble of his life (*Frat. V. D.* p. 123). The next move in the chess game was that Boniface, in that same June, sent the Cardinal Matteo d'Acquasparta in the character of a pacificator, really, of course, to support the Neri Guelphs, to counteract the Bianchi with their new

CONFLICT AND DEFEAT

Ghibellinism, all the more dangerous to the Papacy because it was identified no longer with feudalism, but, in idea at least, with liberty, and insisted on Church reforms. Dante and his colleagues accordingly turned a deaf ear to the Cardinal's proposals, and adopted a line of their own. They would act with a rigorous impartiality and banish the leaders of the two factions. The Donati or Neri party, including Corso himself, were sent to Castello della Pieve; the Bianchi, including the Cerchi and the poet's friend Guido Cavalcanti, to Sarzana. We note that the latter, allowed to return to Florence with others of the same party on the ground of failing health, caused by the unhealthiness of the locality, died in the autumn of the same year (*Vill.* viii. 42). This was the one memorable act in Dante's official life.* It was enough to make him the object of a life-long enmity. He was, however, too strong, and had too large a following to be attacked at once. One indication of his prominence in civic matters is the fact that in

* Possibly his breaking one of the fonts in the Baptistry of St. John (*H.* xix. 20) may have been another.

THE LIFE OF DANTE

April 1301 he was named as a Commissioner of Public Works to superintend the widening and improvement of streets near the Borgo Allegri (*Bart.* v. 119).

Plots, however, were thickening. Corso Donati, the *gran barone* of Florence, the Catiline of the small republic, who had gained for himself and for his house the ill-omened sobriquet of the *Malefami* (*D. C.* p. 267), had not accepted his banishment tamely, and was determined to avenge himself on the man by whom it had been brought about. He went straight to Rome, offered his services to the Pope, for whom he had already acted as governor of one of the cities of Romagna (*Faur.* i. 169), and implored his intervention. Boniface caught eagerly at the opening thus presented. It fell in with a wider scheme which had already presented itself to his subtle and daring mind. He would play the old Papal game of dividing and governing, and get through France what he was not likely to obtain from the Empire. Albert of Hapsburg, though not actively aggressive, took little or no part, for good or evil, in the affairs of Italy (*Purg.* vi.

CONFLICT AND DEFEAT

97). Philip the Fair promised to be, as Boniface found afterwards to his cost, one of the strongest kings of Europe; and at this crisis of 1300 the two were allied by what seemed to be a common interest. Boniface had acted as arbitrator between Philip and Edward I. He had assigned the crown of Hungary to Charles Martel of the house of Anjou. He had excommunicated Albert. Philip might well appear as the "dearest and most obedient son of the Church" (Milm. *L. C.* vii. 88). Those whom Dante called the new Pilate and the leader of the new Pharisees (*Purg.* xx. 91; *H.* xxvii. 85) were confederate together. In Dante's imagery, the giant and the harlot were caressing one another in the chariot which was the symbol of the Church (*Purg.* xxxii. 153). And Philip had a brother, Charles of Valois, Duke of Alençon, who had married the daughter of Baldwin, the Latin Emperor of the East. That prince (*Sans-Terre* or "Lackland," as men called him) was in search of a patrimony, and, like other princes, in earlier or later times, in like circumstances, was ready to go anywhere and do anything for one, or

THE LIFE OF DANTE

that failing, for its equivalent in hard cash. On that Prince accordingly the Pope cast his eye, as likely to be a convenient tool with which to work out his design of bringing the cities of Tuscany under Papal control. He had prepared the way by a letter to the French clergy dated November 21 (*Weg.* p. 149, from *Tosti*, ii. 292), in which, ostensibly dwelling on the duty of a new Crusade to recover Acre from the Soldan (*H.* xxvii. 89), he urges the necessity of pacifying Italy, especially Tuscany, the cities of which (obviously Florence is pointed at) were in rebellion against their mother the Church, and Sicily, as a preliminary measure. Charles was accordingly invited to appear in Italy, in the character of a pacificator (*Paciarus*). The plan began to be talked of at Rome, and the Neri in Florence whispered the threats and the hopes which sprang out of the conspiracy. The Bianchi were alarmed. As a party, they were weak in character and will. The five Priori who had been in office with Dante were absolute nobodies. The Cerchi were so timid and vacillating in the self-content of their riches, that they are believed by many

CONFLICT AND DEFEAT

to have sat for the portrait of the neutrals of *H.* iii. 34-51 (Church, *E. R.* p. 28); Vieri or Torrigiano, leading members of the house, to have been the original of the *gran rifiuto* (*H.* iii. 60). Salterello had ability and energy, but his character, if we may trust Dante's estimate of it, was profligate and vicious (*Par.* xv. 128). The poet already felt the isolation of which he afterwards spoke as forced upon him by the worthlessness of his associates, and when it was proposed that he should go to Rome on their behalf to countermine the plots of Corso Donati, asked in a tone of almost sublime egotism, "If I go, who is to remain? if I remain, who is to go?"* (*Bocc. V. D.*)

In the meantime the schemers were working underground, and officially the councils of Florence were still discussing the proposals of the Cardinal of Acquasparta. During the early months of 1301, accordingly, we find entries

* The biographers are, for the most part, so vague and confused on the subject of this mission as almost to warrant Bartoli's scepticism (*V.* 131) as to whether it has a place in history. I have endeavoured, as far as may be, to fasten on the solid nucleus of a document or a date, and to place the facts thus brought before us in their right order.

THE LIFE OF DANTE

in the minutes of the Council of the Greater Arts, now reckoned as Twelve, of proposals for giving the election of the Priori and the Gonfaloniere of Justice a more popular character (April 14), which were proposed or supported by Dante; and in those of June 19th, when the Council of the Hundred (an Assembly of Notables) met together with that of the Greater Arts to discuss the proposal of the Cardinal that Florence should send a contingent of one hundred men to the Papal army in Romagna—a proposal the smallness of which indicates with sufficient clearness that it was of the “thin end of the wedge” order—one member, obviously of the Neri party, moved an affirmative resolution. Another—one, I surmise, of the Cerchi trimmers—proposed that the question should be adjourned. But we read in the brief record, “*Dante Alagherii consuluit quod de servitio faciendo Domino Papæ nihil fiat.*” That special joint-meeting seems to have broken up without a division. But on the same day, probably immediately afterwards, the Council of the Hundred held another separate meeting, and

CONFLICT AND DEFEAT

the same resolution was proposed, with a limitation of the service of the troops sent to the coming kalends of September. Again we find the record "*Dante Alagherii consuluit quod de servitio faciendo Domino Papæ nihil fiat.*" The motion was carried by forty-eight against thirty-two. A subsequent resolution, which followed logically, for a grant of three thousand gold *lire* to defray the expenses of the troops, was carried by eighty votes against one solitary dissentient. It is not difficult, I think, to conjecture whose was the hand that put the negative ball into the ballot-box. Dante may have remembered how Farinata had stood out alone against his fellow-Ghibellines when the existence of Florence was at stake (*H. x. 91*), and resolved that he would have neither part nor lot in the discreditable transaction (*Frat. V. D. pp. 135-138*). Later on we have another meeting of the larger or collective Council, to deliberate on the question of maintaining Gian della Bella's Ordinances of Justice inviolate. Here, unfortunately, the minutes are imperfect, and we have only the tantalising entry "*Dante Alagherii consuluit*" . . . Appa-

THE LIFE OF DANTE

rently the meeting ended in accepting a **motion** that "*prædicta omnia*," *sc.* the Ordinances and the Statutes of the People should be left to the care of the Podestà, the Captain, the **Priori**, and the Gonfaloniere.

The extracts thus given agree with the statement of Dino Compagni (p. 254) that the embassy to Rome in which Dante took part, with three others, was sent by the Priori who held office from 15th August to 15th October 1301, and make it probable that he started for his journey to Rome in the last-named month. It is probable, I think, that the Neri were as glad of his going as those who sent him; possible even that they made a show of assent and consent to it. They feared his presence at Florence as much as their opponents hoped from his presence at Rome. He little thought, as he started on his journey, that he was never to enter the gates of the city or see his wife again, or what long years of suffering and poverty and disappointment that embassy would bring with it. His "beautiful St. John" and the stone in the Piazza of the Duomo—which, as the *Sasso di Dante*, was to become memor-

CONFLICT AND DEFEAT

able to after ages—these were to know him no more.

I am writing a life of Dante, not a history of Florence, and I will content myself with the briefest summary of what passed there after his departure. The Priori who took office on October 15th (Dino Compagni being one) sought to reconcile the two factions, not as Dante had done, by impartial coercion, and banishing the turbulent leaders on both sides, but by a process of "levelling upwards" and division of spoils, public offices being shared equally by the two parties. It was one of the half-measures characteristic of men who, like the Cerchi, had not the courage of their convictions, and only tempted the Neri to bolder action. The whole Guelph party, prompted by the Neri, had held a meeting early in June 1301 in the Church of the Trinità, which had resulted in the banishment of some Neri. Now that faction drew up an address to the Pope and Charles, representing that the Bianchi were Ghibellines, enemies alike of the Papal See and of France (this probably grew out of the views which Dante then was known to

THE LIFE OF DANTE

hold, and which then, or at a later date, were embodied in the *De Monarchiâ*), and requested Charles, by this time at Bologna, to lose no time in coming to their assistance. Charles had not, up to this time, shown any great haste. He had crossed the Alps with a French army in August, had passed by Pistoia and Florence without action, though the former was in the possession of the Bianchi, and gone on to confer with the Pope at Anagni (*Weg.* 151). From thence, after receiving instructions to settle Tuscany before he meddled with Sicily, he passed to Siena, received an embassy of the Florentines, who brought with them 3000 gold florins, and of the Bianchi, whom he soothed with pacific assurances, and finally entered Florence on November 1. There he repeated, with solemn protestations, his announcement that he had only come as the restorer of peace. The banished Neri, however, followed him in large numbers; the Bianchi were afraid to leave their houses. Corso Donati forced an entrance into the city on November 5, and the *gran barone* was received with loud *vivas*. The houses of the Bianchi, Dante's included, were

CONFLICT AND DEFEAT

sacked, and many burnt. Plunder was the order of the day, and the rich became poor, and the poor rich with ill-gotten gain. The Priori were deposed. Legal prosecutions followed on mob violence, and the leaders of the Bianchi were condemned as traitors and rebels, and punished with confiscation of their property and with exile (*Vill.* viii. 39-42 ; *D. C. B.* 1).

These violent measures went beyond the intentions of the policy of Boniface, and the Cardinal of Acquasparta was again sent, to play once more the part of a mediator, to find himself thwarted by Charles and Donati, to launch the *brutum fulmen* of an interdict. Dante had remained at Rome when the other ambassadors had returned to Florence, and a remarkable passage in *Purg.* xxxii. 155 suggests the thought that the Pope's last step had been, in part, owing to his influence. It is certain, at any rate, that he was singled out for attack by the Neri party, now triumphant, with a specially vindictive malignity. Sentence against him was given by Cante de' Gabrielli of Gubbio, who, as a tool of the Donati party, had entered Florence in the train of Charles of Valois

THE LIFE OF DANTE

(*D. C.* p. 158), and had been chosen as Podestà. It is dated January 27, 1302. It condemns Dante Alighieri and three of his colleagues in their two months' tenure of office in 1300, on no other evidence than common report, as guilty of extortion, embezzlement, corruption, all summed up in the technical term *baratteria*; of having resisted the Pope and Charles, and expelled the Neri, who were faithful servants of the Church. They had been cited to appear and take their trial (four days had been allowed between the citation and the decree), and had not come. They were now fined 5000 florins each for their contumacy. They were to restore their ill-gotten gains. If they did not pay, their property was to be confiscated. They were banished for two years, and declared incapable of ever holding any public office. The triumph of Donati was complete. He had done more than exact the "eye for an eye," exile for exile. He had, he thought, succeeded in branding the name of his great opponent with indelible disgrace. After forty days (March 10) the sentence was republished on the ground that

CONFLICT AND DEFEAT

the accused had failed to purge themselves from contumacy, with the addition that if they were found on Florentine territory they were to be burnt alive. The last sentence included, it may be noted, Lapo Salterello (*Frat. V. D.* pp. 147-152).

How, we ask, had Dante spent the three or four months he had passed in Rome before this sentence was promulgated? Imagination may picture the meeting of the Poet and the Pope, each with an indomitable will and love of power, each, in his way, an idealist, holding incompatible theories; but all that we are told is that the Pope summoned him and his fellow-ambassadors, scolded them for their obstinacy, and promised them his benediction if they were obedient (*D. C.* p. 254). Two were to return to Florence; he and one other remained at Rome for further instructions. I have hinted above that the pacific mission of the Cardinal of Acquasparta may perhaps be traced to his influence. Dante represents himself in *Purg.* xxxii. 155 as having attracted the favouring glances of the harlot who represents the Papacy, and so exposed her to the jealousy and cruelty

THE LIFE OF DANTE

of her giant lover. He flattered himself, that is, that he had done something to break up that unholy alliance of the evil powers of the Papacy and France. With the tendency natural to a man of letters who drifts into the transactions of *la haute politique*, he traced (not wholly without ground, though, it may be, exaggerating the extent of his influence) the outrages of Anagni and the Babylonian exile of Avignon to the disruption of which he had been the cause. Profound as was his antipathy to Boniface in his pervading simony, his grasping ambition, his skill in using others as his tools to their own damnation (*H.* xix. 53, xxvii. 70-123), his persistent vindictiveness against the house of Colonna, he could yet look on him with a certain pity, as his wrath kindled into a white heat against the new Pilate, who, in the case of the Templars and the Pope, had shown himself yet more pitiless and base. (*Purg.* xx. 85-93. *Comp. Frat. O. M.* iii. 404.)

Giotto, we may remember, was still at Rome during Dante's stay, and the intercourse of the two friends was, we cannot doubt, renewed. I conjecture, though I cannot prove, that the

CONFLICT AND DEFEAT

poet went during that time to Naples ; that he learnt the traditions as to the death of Manfred and his burial by the Verde (*Purg.* iii. 127-131) on the spot ; that he thus visited the great Benedictine monastery of Monte Cassino, and became acquainted with the Vision of Fra Alberigo, which was the most precious of its treasures (*Par.* xxii. 37) ; that he formed his estimate of the "cripple of Jerusalem" (*Purg.* vii. 27, xix. 127), Charles II., then on the throne of Naples, from personal knowledge, and learnt to contrast the pedant Prince Robert with the flower of chivalry whom he had known and loved in Charles Martel (*Par.* viii. 55, 145). The medical school at Salerno, too, I can scarcely doubt, would attract one who, both practically and theoretically, was interested in the studies which had made it famous. And to this period in Dante's life I assign, not conjecturally, the interesting episode in his life connected with the friendship between him and Immanuel ben Salomo of Rome. That scholar, son of a Rabbi of repute, was born *circ.* 1270.*

* Jewish physicians, it may be noted, were much employed in the Middle Ages by royal personages, and even popes. Benjamin of Tudela names the school of Salerno,

THE LIFE OF DANTE

He was conspicuous among his fellow-Jews for his literary culture. With a quaint, cynical humour which reminds one of Heine, he wrote many minor poems, which he collected under the title of "Machberoth."* The last of its twenty-eight sections or groups of poems is a vision of Tophet and Eden (it is significant that the Jew does not acknowledge a Purgatory), which presents so many points of resemblance to Dante's Hell and Paradise, that it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that one borrowed from the other, or probably that they compared notes, and that their borrowing was reciprocal. Immanuel is guided in his perplexity, not by Virgil, but by the prophet Daniel. He, too, hears in the gates of Hell the cry that those

which he visited in 1172, as having the highest reputation among the children of Edom (= Latin Christendom) (Hamilton's *Hist. of Medicine*, i. 323). It is significant that the Jews of Salerno were placed under the special care of the Archbishop of that city. The interest of common studies would, I conceive, naturally draw Dante into intercourse with the *savants* of that race there or elsewhere.

* The word occurs in the Hebrew of 1 Chron. xxii. 3, and 2 Chron. xxxiv. 11, and is rendered by the A.V. as "joinings" in (1), "couplings" in (2). As a title it was probably intended to suggest the idea of "analogies" or "parables." Comp. Etheridge, *Jerusalem and Tiberias*, pp. 288, 385; Jost, *Judenth.* iii. 82.

CONFLICT AND DEFEAT

who enter in must abandon every hope (*H.* iii. 9). He places Plato, Aristotle, Hippocrates, Galen in his Tophet (*H.* iv. 132-144). He compares the adulteresses to "doves driven by the storm" (*H.* v. 82). He, too, places, as Dante does, two righteous heathen in his Eden, and they are not Trajan and Rhipeus (*Par.* xx. 44, 68), but Cyrus and Pharaoh's daughter. Prophets greet him as their fellow, and place him high above all commentators (*H.* iv. 100-102). He, too, sees the avaricious and the prodigal grouped together, and crying "Give, give!" in their thirst for gain (*H.* vii. 30), and finds in Tophet, as Dante found Brunetto (*H.* xv. 30), one whom he had loved and honoured upon earth. One comes to him and Daniel in the sackcloth and ashes of a penitent, as Statius comes to Dante and Virgil, and joins them in their pilgrimage (*Purg.* xxi. 85). He cites, in the notes in his numerous commentaries, Dante's favourite writers—Augustine, Albert of Cologne, and Aquinas. Daniel, after guiding the poet through the mysteries of the unseen world, and charging him to record them for the good of mankind, vanishes, as Virgil

THE LIFE OF DANTE

vanishes in *Purg.* xxx. 49. Immanuel, after a vain search for him, wakes from his dream, and so the poem ends. The coincidences thus indicated have led the eminent scholar Theodor Paur, whose paper in the *D. Gesell.* (iii. pp. 423-462) I am now epitomising, to the conclusion that Immanuel meant his guide Daniel to stand for Dante, and others (whom Paur, however, does not follow) to the conjecture that the fragmentary knowledge of Hebrew, as shown for instance in the discussion as to *El* and *Eli* in *Par.* xxvi. 136, and *V. E.* i. 4, may have come to him from his Jewish friend.

The assumption that there was a friendship between the two men is confirmed by four sonnets, two of which passed between Bosone da Gubbio and Immanuel, two between Bosone and Cino da Pistoia, whether Dante's friend, or a *doppelgänger* of the same name, is open to conjecture. In the first pair, Bosone writes to condole with Immanuel on two sorrows which had fallen on him in the same year—one the death of wife or child, the other that of Dante—and comforts him with the thought that

CONFLICT AND DEFEAT

Dante has found a resting-place in Paradise. In the other, the actual — or *pseudo* — Cino writes to Bosone that his friends Dante and Immanuel are both in Hell, sharing with Alessio Interminai the doom of the flatterers (*H.* xviii. 122). The thought thus expressed is so entirely at variance with the prevailing tone of the poems of Cino da Pistoia, who consoles Dante on the death of Beatrice (*Canz.* vii.), calls him his beloved brother (*S.* xci.), and writes a loving *In Memoriam* Canzone on his death (*C.* cxii.), that one would fain reject the idea that he could have written the sonnet just referred to. But whoever wrote it, it comes in as evidence that Bosone, Immanuel, and Dante were looked on as a triad of friends; and as Immanuel lived at Rome, it is a natural inference that Dante's friendship with him began in that city.

The public affairs in which Dante took part have necessarily occupied a prominent position in this section of his biography. I do not therefore suppose that his intellectual literary life was at a stand-still. The *V. N.* had probably been composed, and in some sense

THE LIFE OF DANTE

published,* about 1297. Parts of the *Convito* reflecting the transition period of his mental history were, in the judgment of experts, composed before his exile. The thought which closes the *V. N.*, and which took a more definite shape in the conversion crisis of Easter, 1300, was not likely to remain dormant for many months. It is probable, as stated in the letter of Frate Ilario, that he at first contemplated writing a Latin poem after the manner of Virgil. That such a poem would have been a masterpiece in its way, catching the Virgilian ring, the Latin Eclogues which Dante wrote in the last year of his life give sufficient proof. He had formed a *bello stilo* on the model of Virgil (*H. i. 87*), which, though it afterwards fashioned his Italian verse, bore, we can scarcely doubt, its first fruits in Latin. If so, we may rejoice that he abandoned a design which could scarcely have had any other result than an Epic after the manner of Petrarch's

* It has to be remembered that this word had then a very different connotation from that which it has in current use now. Some ten or twelve transcribed copies on parchment, one or two presented to distinguished patrons, the rest left for sale on the shelves of a *stationarius* or bookstall-keeper at a university, that was the mediæval idea of publication.

CONFLICT AND DEFEAT

Africa, read by a few scholars at the time, and remaining on the shelves of libraries to gather the dust of centuries. We collect from the *V. E.* (i. 16), from the *Conv.* (i. 5), which, though written in exile, embraces the researches and the thoughts of years, what were the motives which led him to change his plan. He craved for a larger audience than the narrow circle of scholars or of pedants who were the only readers of Latin verses (*Conv.* i. 8). He felt that the reputation he had gained as "*poeta Fiorentino*" had been acquired not by being the echo of an older poet, but by singing as the sweet spirit of Love, the dictator, moved him, and in his mother-tongue (*Purg.* xxiv. 52). If he was called, as he felt himself called, to be "the poet of righteousness," as his friend Cino da Pistoia was "the poet of love" (*V. E.* ii. 2), he sought with an eager and passionate desire to lead many to that righteousness. There rose before him the vision of what his mother-tongue might be in the hands of a master—the Italian, not of Rome, or Bologna, or Padua, or Verona, or even Florence, but a *lingua curialis*, musical

THE LIFE OF DANTE

and mellifluous, subtle and persuasive, "*illuminans et illuminatum*," ready to receive the coinage of new words from the mint of a mind like his own (*V. E.* i. 17). With this view he trained himself in the mechanism of verse as no poet of any nation had ever trained himself before; adopted or invented the most fantastic combinations of rhythm and of rhyme, *Sestine*, *Ballate*, *Canzoni*, *Sonnets*, and became an expert in each. He tamed the rough and rushing words, which were "like a troop of wild horses that had never gone in harness before" (Grimm, *Mich. Ang.* i. 17), till they were as a steed that knows its rider and obeys the slightest touch; till he could say with truth that "rhymes had never made him say anything but what he meant to say, but that often he had made words say in his rhymes what they were not wont to express for other poets" (*Ott. Comm. H.* x. 85). From that gymnastic school, from those acrobatic *tours de force*, the true athlete, the knight of song, went forth into the Tournament of Poesy, challenging the great masters of his own time and of the past (*H.* iv. 101, xxv. 94-99; perhaps *Purg.* xi. 99, xxiv. 55-60), conquering and to conquer.

THE SUFFERINGS OF THE EXILE

DANTE had started from Rome, and was halting at Siena on his way to Florence, when the news of his sentence reached him, probably in April 1302. With that news there came the more welcome tidings that Charles of Valois had, under pressure from the Pope, at last left Florence. The Bianchi had a better chance of succeeding, as they had often done before, in turning the tables on the Neri by yet another revolution. The refugees joined Dante. The Siennese gave them, one imagines, but a cold reception. Dante speaks of them as vain, luxurious, ease-loving, in a tone of irritation and scorn (*H.* xxix. 121-139), which reminds one of the keen sarcasm of Deborah's invective against Reuben, or Dan, or Meroz (*Judg.* v. 16-23). Siena, however, like all other places that he visited, was made to contribute to the treasure-chambers of his great storehouse, and

THE LIFE OF DANTE

so we find him recording the story of La Fiammetta (Purg. v. 133), of Provenzan Salvani (Purg. x. 121), of Sapia, and Peter the Comb-maker (Purg. xiii. 109-127). The exiles met soon afterwards at Gargonza, an Aretine castle, and determined to ally themselves (I think we can trace in this the master-hand of the author of the *De Monarchiâ*) with the remnants of the Ghibelline party that were scattered throughout the cities of Italy. There was a prospect of the new Ghibellinism, "*imperium et libertas*," as contrasted with the older feudalism, of equality as contrasted with the class divisions of race and wealth, of which the poet had formed for himself so noble an ideal (*Conv.* iv.). I abandon the attempt to chronicle, week by week, the schemes, plots, debates of the company of exiles, and content myself with giving the more prominent facts that connect themselves with the poet or his works. Of these I note first the fact that they found a leader in Alessandro of Romena, of the old Ghibelline family of the Counts Guidi.* Dante

* [The letter, ascribed to Dante, addressed to Alexander's nephews upon his death about 1308, is pretty certainly

THE SUFFERINGS OF THE EXILE

ad been chosen as one of a Council of Twelve who acted as his assessors, and had thus been brought into close contact with him. Under his guidance they turned to Arezzo, as an old Ghibelline city, where Uguccone della Faggiuola was in office as Podestà. For the present, however, he was halting between two opinions, expecting a cardinal's hat for his nephew; and the exiles finding but a cold reception there, sought Forlì as a refuge. That city was under Scarpetta degli Ordelaffi as a Papal vicar, and his action was significant of the altered policy of Boniface, of the widening rift between him and the French king, of which I have already spoken as probably the result of Dante's diplomacy. He placed himself, strange to say, at the head of the Bianchi exiles. Pistoia, Pisa, Bologna were ready to help them. By his advice they sent an embassy, of which Dante was one, to Bartolommeo della Scala, lord of Verona, who had succeeded his father Albert in 1301. To that

spurious. For one thing, Alexander of Romena, Palatine of Tuscany, was alive in 1316, and no other of the name is recorded in that generation.]

THE LIFE OF DANTE

mission to the "*gran Lombardo*" we may refer the gratitude to that illustrious house expressed in *Par.* xvii. 71; the hopes formed by the poet, with his singular insight into boy life and character, of the youngest brother of the house, then but twelve years old—Francesco, better known as the "Can Grande" of the Ghibelline hopes (note on *H.* i. 101); his acquaintance with the local customs of Verona, its naked races (*H.* xv. 122) and wrestlings (*H.* xvi. 22), with the traditions of its abbey church (*Purg.* xviii. 118), with the scenery of Trent and the Valley of the Adige and the Lago di Garda (*H.* xii. 5, xx. 61-78). A man of Dante's tastes and character was not likely to be at Verona without visiting the famous cities which lie within easy reach of it, and we may probably refer to this period his notices of Mantua (*H.* xx. 76-93), Padua (*H.* xv. 7), and Venice (*H.* xxi. 7). It was probably during this mission, and in Dante's absence, that the exiles suffered their first defeat, in March 1303. Under Ordelaffi they endeavoured to force an entrance into Florence. This failed, and many who were taken prisoners were beheaded.

THE SUFFERINGS OF THE EXILE

The party were reduced for a time to inaction. During that interval Dante heard of the outrages at Anagni and the death of Boniface VIII. (October 1303). The jealous giant had indeed avenged himself on his paramour (*Purg.* xxxii. 155). If Dante, on the one hand, in his pitiless and stern judgment, placed Boniface in Hell on account of his vindictiveness, his falsehood, the policy which had brought misery on Florence and on Italy, his profligate simony, the ultramontane sacerdotalism, which saw in the Empire only a subordinate power with a derived and dependent authority (*H.* xix. 53, 77), on the other, he hated the French king and his lawyer-agents, Nogaret and others, yet more, as caricaturing the true Ghibelline theory, and as conspicuous through his whole life for greed of gain, ruthless cruelty, and the abuse of the forms of law (*Purg.* xx. 49-93).

Benedict XI., who succeeded Boniface, a man of mild and genial character, tried to act the part of a mediator, and sent the Cardinal Niccolo da Prato to check the excesses of Corso Donati and his followers, to bring about the return of the exiles, and to set things

THE LIFE OF DANTE

straight generally. He came to Florence in 1304, and remained there for a few months; opened communication with the exiles, and received a letter from Dante (*Ep. i.*), as secretary to Alessandro da Romena, who had apparently resumed the position of their leader after the defeat of Ordelaffi. It is addressed to him in his character of pacificator, and is couched in words of profound respect. The hearts of the Bianchi had been filled with joy at his kind words. All that they desired was the peace and freedom of their city, the correction of abuses, their own restoration. They were ready, as devout sons of the Church, to sheathe their swords and submit themselves to his arbitration. The Cardinal's work seemed at first to prosper. On the 26th of April the citizens of Florence gathered in the Piazza of S. Maria Novella, with olive branches in their hands, and loud professions of fraternity (*Vill. viii. 62-68; D. C. iii.*).

Within a few days Florence was visited, as in the grim irony of history, by a terrible disaster, on which many (Dante perhaps included) must have looked as a judgment of

THE SUFFERINGS OF THE EXILE

God. On the 1st of May one of the strange grotesque performances in which mediæval taste delighted was exhibited on the Arno. The river was to represent Hell. Boats bearing naked demons and their victims, with pitchforks and burning torches, crowded the river. The Ponte Carraia, then a wooden structure, gave way. The crowds that stood on it fell into the river, and the counterfeit horrors passed into dread realities (*Vill.* viii. 70).*

The hopes raised by the Cardinal's efforts were, however, delusive. His pacific intentions were thwarted, and he left Florence on June 4th, leaving the rebellious city under an interdict (*Vill.* viii. 70). There is a possible allusion to his mission in *H.* xxvi. 9. We shall meet with him again as playing a prominent part in a more important transaction, the election of Henry of Luxemburg as Emperor.

Matters were further embittered by a faction

* The suggestion that this display may have been the starting-point of Dante's *Hell* is sufficiently traversed by the facts (1) that he did not see it, and (2) that he had probably begun his poem before it. If I were to hazard any conjecture as to a connexion between the two, would rather be that the Florentines, who knew something of his proposed work, tried to anticipate and outdo it.

THE LIFE OF DANTE

fight at Florence, which ended in a great fire, destroying 1700 houses, and involving many wealthy families in ruin. It was said to have been the act of an incendiary priest who belonged to the Neri. Thereupon Benedict summoned the leaders of that party, including Corso Donati, to Perugia to defend themselves. During their absence the exiles, nominally still under Alessandro, but on this occasion commanded by Baschiera Tosinchi, made another rash attempt at a forcible entry (July 22), rushed into the Piazza of St. Mark with drawn swords and olive wreaths on their heads, and crying "Peace, peace!" Alas! there was no peace; and they were cut down, imprisoned, forced into cellars to hide themselves, utterly routed. The doom of banishment seemed as immutable as the decree of fate (*Vill.* viii. c. 72; *Weg.* pp. 177-9).

From this point the life of the exile was that of a wanderer. Before we trace those wanderings, sometimes by the light of vague tradition only, sometimes by that of a dated document, it may be well to ask what had been the fortunes of his wife and children since he had

THE SUFFERINGS OF THE EXILE

left Florence in October 1301. The sentence of confiscation passed on him might seem to have involved them in absolute poverty. Of this, however, there is no evidence. When we come across traces of his sons, they meet us as having received a good education. Boccaccio's story (*V. D.*) of the discovery of the first seven cantos of the *Inferno* indicates that they still lived in the old home. It seems probable that Gemma, who was of the Donati family, had sufficient influence with her kinsman Corso to secure, under the plea of settlement or dowry, no inconsiderable portion of her husband's property. The poverty which he had to endure, "*quasi mendicando*" (*Conv.* i. 3), from city to city and court to court, the "eating of others' bread," the "going up and down others' stairs" (*Par.* xvii. 58-60), fell on him, but not on her.

Of the probable resting-places for the exile's weary feet we note—

(1.) The castle of Alessandro da Romena in the Casentino. The letter already quoted recognises his goodness and munificence. It was natural that the secretary should join his

THE LIFE OF DANTE

lord. The references to the Casentino district, the upper valley of the Arno, in *H.* xxx. 65, *Purg.* v. 94, xiv. 43, fall in with this hypothesis.

(2.) Villani reports a visit to Bologna, partly to continue his own studies, partly to superintend those of his son Pietro. The evidence is not strong, but is hardly to be rejected on the ground that the boy was not more than fourteen years old. That, as has been shown above (p. 40), was a common age enough for university students. In any case, however, the studies must have been interrupted in the spring of 1306, when the Bolognese, having expelled the Bianchi (Dante and his son, if they were there, must have been among those so treated), were placed by the Pope's legate (Napoleon Orsini, who will meet us further on, at Avignon), who took the part of the exiles, under an interdict which closed the schools and excommunicated every professor or student who continued to teach or learn there (*Vill.* viii. 85).

(3.) A visit to Padua stands on firmer ground, Dante's name occurring as a witness to an agreement dated August 27, 1306. He

THE SUFFERINGS OF THE EXILE

is described as then living in the parish of S. Lorenzo. A house known as the Casa Carrarese in that quarter is shown with the inscription—not without an element of comfort for us—

*“Fazioni e vendette
Qui trassero Dante 1306 :
Dai Carrara, da Giotto
Ebbe men duro esilio.”*

His visit to this city was probably connected with the fact that Giotto was then painting the frescoes of the Arena Chapel of the Scrovigni which was built by Enrico of that house, who had joined the brotherhood of the Frati Gaudenti (*H.* xxiii. 103), by way of expiation for his father's avarice (*H.* xvii. 64). Ruskin (*Giotto and his Works*) draws a pleasant picture (embodied in the chromo-lithograph from Mrs. Higford Burr's drawing, published by the Arundel Society) of the artist and his wife in the chapel; “Dante, with abstracted eye, alternately conversing with his friend and watching the gambols of the children playing on the grass before the door.” (See also *Lindsay*, ii. 14-26.) One notes, as presenting

THE LIFE OF DANTE

points of contact in the subjects of the frescoes, the three Theological and four Ethical virtues (*Purg.* i. 23, xxxi. 103-111), the Marriage at Cana (*Purg.* xiii. 29), the treachery of Judas (*H.* xxxiv. 62), Inconstancy whirling round upon the Wheel of Fortune (*H.* vii. 96)—(Lindsay, *ibid.*) We may think further of the traveller as he observed the embankments which defended Padua from the inundations of the Brenta, and compared them with those which he had seen in his earlier travels between Bruges and Wissant (*H.* xv. 1-9). Within two months of the Paduan document we have another in which Dante appears as taking a more important part, and which shows him to have been then in the Lunigiana region of Northern Tuscany. His journey would probably have led him through Mantua, with all its memories of Virgil and Sordello, and Parma, which had remained faithful to the Ghibelline cause. Of all the noble families of Italy, there were none whose claims to true nobility Dante would have admitted so readily, even on his own principle of *virtus sola nobilitas*, as those of the Malaspini of that

THE SUFFERINGS OF THE EXILE

region (*Cans.* xvi. ; *Purg.* viii. 118). He dwells on their wide-spread reputation, on the glory which they had gained by the sword, and yet more by the right use of their wealth. He fixes the date to which we have now come as that of his experience of their goodness (*Purg.* viii. 134). One of the family appears in the agreement as a brother (*qu.* Tertiary) of the Franciscan Order. Yes, there the document lies before me, as printed in *Frat. V. D.* p. 197, in all the amplitude of the old law Latin, once so full of life to all connected with it. It is in form a treaty of peace between Francis, Marquis of Malaspina, and his brothers Moroello and Conradin, acting by their procurator, *Dante Alagerius*, of the one part, and the Bishop of Luni on the other, intended to bring to an end a long series of grievances and encroachments on either side. The fact that Dante was chosen for this office implies that the Malaspini had some previous knowledge of him. The reputation which he had gained by his diplomacy in the treaty between the Commune of Florence and that of San Gemignano may have pointed him out as an expert who could be trusted in

THE LIFE OF DANTE

the complicated difficulties of a transaction of this nature. For the most part the terms of the agreement are such as might have been drafted by any lawyer in any century; but the preamble has, if I mistake not, one sentence pre-eminently Dantesque. It recites the long-standing quarrel between the two parties, but now "the Bishop and the Marquises are following the example of the Lord's words to His Apostles (there is a dogmatic meaning, I fancy, in the 'exemplo summi *Patris*,' reminding us, as it does, of the '*sommo Giove crocifisso*' of *Purg.* vi. 118), *Pacem meam do vobis; pacem meam relinquo vobis;*" and then, in words which read like a *replica* of the thoughts, hopes, dreams, of an ideal polity embodied in the *Monarchia*:—

"Taking into account, further, that tranquillity ought to be an object of desire to every kingdom, seeing that by her nations grow to completeness, and all useful arts are maintained, and that she, as the mother of all good acts, repairs the losses of the human race by a restorative succession, increases all the facilities

THE SUFFERINGS OF THE EXILE

of life, raises manners to a higher culture, whose virtues scarce can worthily be acknowledged, the Lords and the Bishop aforesaid, glorying in the leisurely tranquillity and the calm and peaceful amenities of life in their subjects and followers, and guided by the grace of our Most High Lord and Saviour, do hereby enter into the aforesaid peace for true and perpetual concord."

Something one can trace of a delicate courtesy in the action of the Malaspini in this matter for which Dante, we can well imagine, would feel grateful. They would not offer him the eleemosynary hospitality, the crumbs from the rich man's table, the place "below the salt," which he was destined so often to find in the houses of the rich and noble. He was to come as an official guest, employed in important functions, placed on an equal footing with great personages. I seem to see the grave, proud, reserved, yet courteous Florentine solemnly rising to embrace the Bishop of Luni in his robes, and give him the kiss of peace (*invicem osculantes*) by which the treaty was, as

THE LIFE OF DANTE

it were, signed and sealed. The Malaspini had, moreover, the hereditary reputation of being patrons of literature. They had been conspicuous as welcoming the Troubadours of Provence at their castle in the latter part of the twelfth century (*Weg.* p. 37 ; *Faur.* i. p. 257), and the Moroello, whose name has met us in the treaty, had inherited their tastes. In Boccaccio's story of the discovery of the first seven cantos of the *Inferno*, as well as of many sonnets and *canzoni*, in a closet or chest in Dante's house (a story which he says he had from Andrea Poggi, Dante's nephew), he relates that they were first shown to Dino Frescobaldi, probably one of the banking firm of that name (the name appears in the register of Bishop Drokensford, already quoted), as being himself a poet, and that, as he judged highly of their merit, they were sent, not to Dante himself, but to the Marquis Moroello, with whom he was then staying. He was delighted with them, and gave them to the poet, who made answer—one wishes one could think we have the *ipsissima verba*, and not Boccaccio's *rechauffé* or invention: "I truly thought that these, with many

THE SUFFERINGS OF THE EXILE

other writings of mine, had been destroyed when my house was plundered, and therefore I had dismissed them from my thoughts. But since it has pleased God that they should not be destroyed, and He has brought them back to me, I will take steps to continue the work according to my first intention." Boccaccio adds that the "*seguitando*" of *H. viii. 1* is the indication of this fresh start. With a Herodotean candour which seems to me at once to diminish the actual evidence and to increase the verisimilitude of the narrative, he adds that he heard exactly the same story from Dino Perini, a Florentine friend of Dante's, who meets us again as the "Melibœus" of the Virgilian eclogues at the close of the poet's life, with the notable exception that he repudiated Andrea Poggi's claim to have been the discoverer of the MSS., and claimed that honour for himself (*V. D.*).

True to his habit of gathering wherever he went all local and family traditions which might be worked into his great poem, Dante would seem, during his stay with Moroello, to have sought out those of the Lunigiana, and we find

THE LIFE OF DANTE

are without we may know, in the case of others, the things that are within, and that by the words which we utter to that purpose we, in our turn, may manifest what is within us. For, as it is written, 'By their fruits ye shall know them;' and though this He said of sinners, yet much more universally may we understand it of the righteous, since these always accept the opportunity of disclosing themselves, as those do of concealing. Nor is it only the desire of glory that persuades us to let the good things which we have within manifest themselves; the command of God itself deters us from leaving what has been granted to us by His grace, to remain idle. For God and Nature alike condemn the idle and unprofitable, wherefore that tree which brings forth no fruit in its season is doomed to the fire.

"Truly, therefore, that man whose work, with an exposition of my own, I send to its destination, seems to me, among all other Italians, from his boyhood upward to have unlocked and brought forth the treasure that was within. Wonderful to tell, as I have heard from others, even in earliest youth he essayed

THE SUFFERINGS OF THE EXILE

to speak things unheard before; and more wondrous yet, endeavoured to set forth in our vulgar tongue the things which by men of highest genius can scarcely be expounded in Latin; our vulgar tongue I say, and that not in simple prose, but in melodious verse. And leaving his true praises to be found in his works, where doubtless they shine forth more brightly in the judgment of the wise, I will come briefly to my purpose.

“Behold, therefore, when this man was planning a journey to the regions north of the Alps, and was passing through the diocese of Luni, impelled either by his reverence for the place or by some other motive, he came to the above-named monastery. And when I saw him, as yet unknown to myself and to my brothers, I asked him what he wanted; and when he answered not a word, but went on looking at the buildings,” [a singularly individualising touch this!] “I asked him again what he wanted. Then he, looking round on me and my brothers, answered ‘Peace.’ Thereupon I more and more desired to know from him what manner of man he was, and I drew him apart

THE LIFE OF DANTE

from the others, and after some conversation learnt who he was. Though before that day I had never seen him, yet his fame * had reached me long before this. And after he saw that I was altogether wrapt up in him, and learnt my affection for his works, he with a manner of frank courtesy took out a manuscript from his bosom and kindly placed it in my hands. 'Behold,' said he, 'a part of my work, which, it may be, you have not seen. Such a monument I leave with you that you keep your memory of me fresh.' And when he had shown me the manuscript, I gratefully clasped it to my bosom, and in his presence I opened it, and fixed my eyes on it attentively. And when I saw words written in our vulgar tongue, and my looks showed some surprise, he asked the cause of my hesitation; and I answered that I was surprised at the kind of language that he had chosen, both because it seemed difficult, almost inconceivable, that so arduous a scheme could be rightly embodied in our

* Fame resting, as in the *poeta Fiorentino* of the Apothecaries' Company, chiefly on the Minor Poems—possibly also on Latin poems no longer extant.

THE SUFFERINGS OF THE EXILE

vulgar tongue, and because the combination of so much knowledge with the poor garb of our common speech seemed incongruous. And then he made answer, 'Truly with reason dost thou think thus; and at the outset, when the seed sown, perchance from heaven, was beginning to grow towards a purpose of this nature, I chose a form for it more according to our rules of art; nor did I only choose it, but, writing verses after my usual manner, I began—

*'Ultima regna canam, fluido contermina mundo
Spiritus quæ lata patent, quæ proemia solvunt
Pro meritis cuicunque suis.'**

But when I looked at the state of the time we live in, I saw that the verses of illustrious poets were counted as a thing of nought, and that for this cause men of noble birth, by whom in better times such things were wont to be

-
- * "The kingdoms of the far-off world shall be
The subject of my song, conterminous
With the world's ocean-waters, realms which lie
Oped wide to souls of men, and there to each,
According to his merits, due reward
Or punishment assign."

THE LIFE OF DANTE

written, now leave the liberal arts (alas!) to men of the lower orders. On this account I laid aside the lyre on which I had relied, and prepared another more suitable for the taste of the men of our time; for it is in vain to offer solid food to the mouths of sucklings.' And when he had said this, he added, with much earnestness, that, if I had leisure for such things, his wish was that I should enrich the work with some explanatory notes, and afterwards transmit it to you accompanied by them. This indeed, though I have not fully worked out all that lies hidden in his words, I have laboured at faithfully and with hearty good-will, and, in accordance with his request, who professed himself your devoted friend, I now send the work thus annotated; in which, if there shall appear anything ambiguous, you must impute it wholly to my own incapacity, since without doubt the text ought to be accounted as altogether perfect.

"If, however, your Excellency should inquire about the other two parts of this work, as with the intention of completing it by their addition, you may seek the second part, following this

THE SUFFERINGS OF THE EXILE

in order, from the most noble lord the Marquis Moroello, and the third will be found in the hands of the illustrious Frederick, king of Sicily.* For, as the author assured me, after he had looked round on all Italy, he had chosen you three above all others to whom to offer this tripartite work."

In connexion with this document one or two facts may be noted. (1) The monastery of Santa Croce del Corvo, close to the mouth of the Magra river, was of the Benedictine Order; (2) another monastery of the same Order was found at Trivio, situated in the territory of the Faggiuola family. The monks of the latter were in friendly correspondence with that family, and among the members of the Chapter at the time indicated by the Ilarian letter there was a brother of Uguccione, then a member of the Chapter. A combina-

* As a matter of fact, the *Paradiso* was dedicated to Can Grande of Verona. The references to Frederick in *Purg.* vii. 19, *Par.* xix. 135, xx. 63, *Conv.* iv. 6, show a tone of bitterness which perhaps grew out of disappointment, and disappointment implies previous hope. Frederick had promised support to Henry VII. while living, and drew back from the Ghibelline cause after his death (*Vill.* ix. 54).

THE LIFE OF DANTE

tion of these facts suggests a hypothesis which is at least plausible. Dante had made up his mind to leave Italy for France. He wished to leave the *Inferno*, then completed, with Uguccone, but could not present it in person. He chose a Benedictine monk of Santa Croce del Corvo, as likely to be able to convey it safely to the monastery of the same Order at Trivio, and so to Uguccone himself. He found in Ilario, the first monk to whom he addressed himself, a sympathising admirer, and so entered into the conversation which the letter reports (*Frat. V. D. c. 12*).

The fact of a journey to Paris after Dante's exile rests on the authority of Villani (ix. 136), who was personally acquainted with him—Boccaccio writing vaguely, and Giovanni da Serravalle speaking definitely, of his studying there and at Oxford before he entered on his public life at Florence. I have already said that I see nothing improbable in the statement of the earlier visit. Still less, it seems to me, is there any improbability in the journey which this hypothesis assumes. A sufficient motive, though, it may be, not the only one, would

THE SUFFERINGS OF THE EXILE

be found in the desire to enlarge his knowledge of physical science and of dogmatic theology, as a preparation for the completion of his *magnum opus*, and in the fact that Paris was pre-eminent among all the universities of Europe in both subjects. There the echoes of Aquinas and Roger Bacon's friend, Peter de Maharncuria (Maricourt), were still heard in the lecture-rooms (R. B. *Op. Tert.* 12, 13, 20). Of the Italian universities, Bologna was celebrated chiefly for its lectures on Aristotle and civil law, and therefore would have no special attractions for him; and even if it had, its schools had, as we have seen, been closed in 1306. The expenses of a journey for such a purpose might well be defrayed by the munificence of a patron like Moroello.

It falls in with this theory that there are comparatively few notices of Dante's life at this period. The date of the treaty of Luni is October 1306. It seems probable that he gave up all participation in the action of the Ghibelline Bianchi, who were still struggling, now at Arezzo, now at Forli, now led by the Cardinal Orsini, and now by Ordelaffi, and was content

THE LIFE OF DANTE

more than ever to be "a party by himself" (*Par.* xvii. 69), and that he spent several months at Mulazzo in the Lunigiana, where a tower and a house still bear his name, perhaps also at Fordinovo, the palace-castle of the Malaspini, under the protection of Moroello. Probably the letter written to him from the Casentino valley may belong to this period, and there are traces of his having acted as secretary to Ordelaffi at Forli during part of 1308 (*Frat. V. D.* p. 174). The visit to the Monastery del Corvo, according to this combination, the conjectural character of which I fully admit, falls in the spring of 1309.

The itinerary of the journey to Paris, which I have already traced, may belong of course to an earlier or a later journey. But there are traces in the *Purgatory* and *Paradise* which, if I mistake not, belong especially to the latter. The receding shores and the sound of the vesper-bell floating over the waters suggest a voyage from Luni to Genoa (*Purg.* viii. 1-6), as the Lerici and Turbia cornices (*Purg.* iii. 49) do the roads from Genoa to Spezzia and Nice. The bitterness with which he speaks

THE SUFFERINGS OF THE EXILE

of the base and avaricious Gascon who then, as Clement V., occupied the Papal chair at Avignon (*Par.* xvii. 82, xxx. 143), and of the bishops and cardinals who surrounded him, implies the personal antipathy of one who could speak, as Petrarch spoke, from personal knowledge of the abominations of that Babylonian captivity. He would hear at Paris or elsewhere of the ferocity with which Philip the Fair had hunted to death the great Order of the Knights-Templars (*Purg.* xx. 93); how he had enriched his treasury by debasing the coin of his kingdom (*Par.* xix. 120); how he had bound the Pope, in return for the pressure which decided the election in his favour, by the articles of a secret treaty which pledged him either to abandon the sacred city, which was the centre of Christendom, to its widowed life, bereaved alike of its spiritual and imperial rulers—that must have seemed a death-blow to the ideal of the writer of the *De Monarchiâ*—or to acquiesce in the suppression of the Templars, and to brand the name of Boniface with infamy (*Vill.* viii. 80). If, as I surmise, one object of the journey to Paris was to acquire a more thorough knowledge

THE LIFE OF DANTE

of the astronomic science and dogmatic theology which were to be expounded in the *Paradiso*, we may think of him as sitting at the feet of some Sorbonne professor as he lectured on Aquinas, or some "master of those who know" in the region of natural science, as he unfolded, with astrolabe and globes before him, the latest discoveries or speculations of Roger Bacon and his friend Pierre de Maricourt on the dark spots on the moon's surface (*Par.* ii.), the errors that were creeping into the calendar through men's ignorance of astronomy (*Par.* xxvi. 142), the imagined aspect which the whole planetary system would present to one who looked at it from the sphere of the fixed stars (*Par.* xxii. 133-154). As far as I can judge, the astronomical knowledge of the *Paradiso* is of a higher, more speculative character than that of the *Inferno*.

The studies at Paris, however, whatever may have been their nature, were interrupted by an event which excited his hopes as nothing else had done, and called him back to Italy. On the death of Albert of Hapsburg, who, like his father Rodolph, had never entered Italy (*Purg.*

THE SUFFERINGS OF THE EXILE

vi. 97), there was the usual excitement and intrigue among those who aspired to the imperial dignity. Philip the Fair made desperate efforts to secure it for his brother, the Charles of Valois whose interference in the affairs of Florence had been so fatal to Dante's fortunes. He was thwarted by the secret diplomacy of the Avignon court. The Cardinal Niccolo Albertini da Prato (the self-same man, it will be remembered, who had been sent by Benedict XI. as a pacificator, and had excommunicated Corso Donati and his adherents) persuaded Clement that there must be some limit to the all-grasping ambition of the French king; that it would not do to let Italy become a mere appanage of his dynasty; and so, by his diplomacy, the choice of the electors fell, to the surprise of Europe, on Henry, Count of Luxemburg. He was chosen on the 25th of November 1308, crowned as king of Germany in 1309. He remained for two years in Germany, but it became known in 1310 that he was about to proceed to Italy, and Dante, full of the hopes of the idealist, and eager to take his part in the regeneration of his country, not without some

THE LIFE OF DANTE

expectation that it would lead to his own triumphant return to Florence, hastened back to take his part in bringing the great work, in which he had already, I conceive, had some share, to its completion.

THE DREAM AND THE AWAKENING

I SUBMIT to the judgment of the reader the evidence which seems to me to justify the statement I have just made as at least a probable hypothesis. If, after all, the conclusion to which I have been led on the strength of undesigned coincidences, and of the fact that it combines and explains events which are otherwise isolated and difficult of explanation, requires to be accepted as with a note of interrogation, I claim the benefit of the Baconian axiom, *Prudens interrogatio dimidium scientiæ*. To me it seems to throw light not only on Dante's life and character, but on those of one of the most remarkable and most ill-starred in the long line of German emperors; to clear up the relations between the idealist monarch, born either too early or too late, and

THE LIFE OF DANTE

the idealist poet, who had no resting-place amid the troubles of his time, but who was the representative at once of the traditions of a noble past and of the aspirations of a nobler future.

The story of Henry VII.'s election, with all the bye-play of intrigues behind the scene which led to it, may be told, in the first instance, from the German point of view (*Menzel*, v. 106-136). Philip the Fair, as has just been said, had been plotting before the death of Albert to secure the election of his brother, Charles of Valois. He thought that he had secured the Pope's support by the secret treaty, and extorted from him a letter to the Archbishop of Cologne as one of the electors, recommending Charles. By embassies of his own, by gifts of money and promises, he seemed to have secured the Archbishop's vote. Other German princes, however, were strongly opposed to the aggrandisement of the French dynasty, and looked out for a competitor who would commend himself to the electors. They fixed on Henry, Count of Luxemburg, then in his fortieth year. His territory was not large;

THE DREAM AND AWAKENING

his family had played no conspicuous part in history, but the man himself seemed worthy of all honour. He had showed himself, as the Bayard of Germany, *sans peur et sans reproche*, had fought with all knightly skill and prowess at many tournaments. His character stood high for truth and righteousness. He was the friend of the poor and the oppressed, and within his domain put down with a strong hand the robber barons, who used to sally forth from their castles and plunder merchants and other travellers. It became a proverb that the highways of Luxemburg were as safe as churches elsewhere. It was in his favour, of course, that his brother Baldwin was Archbishop of Treves. A better offer than Philip's won over the Archbishop of Cologne. The Archbishop of Mayence served as a connecting link to secure the Pope's approval. That prelate had risen to his high dignity by his skill as a physician, at first in the court of Henry, afterwards in that of other princes, finally in that of Clement V., who nominated him to the Archbishopric on the ground that so skilful a healer of the bodies of men must

THE LIFE OF DANTE

also be a good physician of their souls. He secured the Pope's approval, threw his weight into Henry's scale, and the result was that he was unanimously elected (he had said that he would not accept the imperial crown if the election were not unanimous) on November 27, 1308. The plans of Philip the Fair were finally checkmated as far as the Empire was concerned.

From the Italian point of view (*Vill.* viii. 101) we have a different story. Philip pressed the claim of his brother on Clement V. as the sixth, the secret article, to which he had pledged himself in blank. Philip and Charles himself were to appear at Avignon, backed by their knights and barons, and the Pope, they thought, would not dare to resist openly. Their plans, however, got wind, and the Pope was alarmed and took secret counsel with the Cardinal da Prato. He advised the Pope to anticipate Philip's formal request by pushing on the election of another emperor. The Pope asked, naturally, who was to be elected. The Cardinal was ready with his answer. The Count of Luxemburg was the best man in all

THE DREAM AND AWAKENING

Germany, loyal, open, Catholic, faithful, and obedient to the Church, "*uomo da venire a grandissime cose.*" The Pope shrank from the publicity of a Bull as certain to rouse opposition. The Cardinal suggested the use of a private seal, probably the seal of the Fisherman, which since (perhaps before) the time of Clement IV. had been used by Popes, instead of the official seal which attested a Papal Bull, for their less formal communications (*D. C. A.* art. "*Ring*"). The letters were sent to the electors, and Henry was chosen accordingly.

The whole subsequent history of the Emperor shows that the Cardinal da Prato was resolved to carry out, through thick and thin, the policy on which he had thus entered. He was appointed as legate in Italy to receive the Emperor on his arrival (*Vill.* viii. 102). In 1311 he was sent in the same character to represent the Pope in the Church of St. John Lateran (*Vill.* ix: 22) at the Emperor's coronation, and officiated in that character on August 1, 1312 (*Vill.* ix. 43). This department of the foreign affairs of the Papal Court was committed to his special care. He gave

THE LIFE OF DANTE

himself heart and soul to the task of reconciling the claims of the Empire and the Church, and acted as the protector of the new and reformed Ghibellinism. What was it, we ask, that led the Cardinal da Prato to adopt this line of action? What do we know of his previous history? To answer those questions we must retrace our steps a little. It will be remembered that he had been sent by Benedict XI. to Florence in March 1303. Villani (viii. 69) describes him on this his first appearance in the Dante drama as a Dominican friar, skilled in Scripture, subtle and sagacious, cautious and diplomatic (*grande pratico*), and of a Ghibelline family. He preached a sermon in the Piazza of St. John, urging measures of peace with Dante and the other exiles, and restored some elements of the constitution of the "*popolo vecchio*" which the Donati faction had set aside. They had recourse to the stratagem of forging a letter in his name to the exiled Bianchi, inviting them to attack Florence, which led to their making inroads as far as Trespiano and Mugello. This roused popular feeling against him, and he went to Prato.

THE DREAM AND AWAKENING

The Neri dogged his steps and spread their calumnies. He was met with murmurs and resistance. He left Prato under an interdict, returned to Florence, and finally, on his departure from that city, June 4, 1304, launched his anathemas against its inhabitants, leaving them, since they chose cursing rather than blessing, under the curse of God and of His Church. No sooner had he returned to Benedict at Perugia than the Pope, by his advice, summoned Corso Donati and eleven other leaders of the Neri (*Vill.* viii. 72) to give an account of their deeds and answer the Cardinal's charges against them. The latter took advantage of their absence to write to the heads of the Ghibelline party among the exiles, at Bologna, Arezzo, Pisa, and Pistoia, urging them to force an entrance into Florence and expel the Neri. They acted on his counsel, and but for the delay caused by the non-arrival of the troops from Pistoia, led by one of the Uberti, would have succeeded. As it was, they advanced on July 20 into the Borgo of San Gallo, and the Aretines carried off the bars of a wooden gate as a trophy

THE LIFE OF DANTE

The Guelph citizens, however, rallied (Villani was one of them) in the Piazza of St. John and the attempt was frustrated. Within a week of the attempt Benedict died, it was reported by poison, at Perugia. Ten months passed before the cardinals could agree on a successor. At last the Cardinal da Prato suggested Bertrand de Goth, Archbishop of Bordeaux, as a Pope who would, on the one hand, be acceptable to the king of France and, on the other, be pliant in their hands as to favour the Ghibelline cause. Philip the Fair gave his consent readily, but, to secure his own interests, had a private interview with the Archbishop, and extorted from him five definite promises : his own reconciliation to the Church and that of his followers ; the condemnation of Boniface ; a grant of all tithes in France for ten years ; the restoration of two of the Colonna family and others to the rank of cardinal. The sixth promise was, as we have seen, as a blank cheque. The Archbishop was to bind himself to meet the king's wishes whenever he thought fit to disclose them, and he did so.

THE DREAM AND AWAKENING

All this shows that the Cardinal da Prato is playing the part of a diplomatist with all the subtlety of an Italian nature; that he was in close communication with the Ghibelline exiles; that his whole policy was framed in accordance with their interests. We ask, whose was the leading mind among those exiles? With whom was the Cardinal most likely to be in close communication? The answer scarcely admits of a doubt. Dante was there, with an established fame, as we have seen, for diplomatic negotiations. He may have known him as Bishop of Ostia in the Jubilee year at Rome. If Prato was his birthplace, that would be another point of contact with the Florentine poet. He had already addressed a letter to the Cardinal (*Ep.* 1), and that letter, undated, but probably in May 1304, implied several others (*vestrarum literarum series*). He had vindicated his own attitude and that of his colleagues as that of a purified Ghibellinism, seeking peace and freedom. He had professed his readiness to accept the Cardinal's mediation and to follow his directions, in a confidential communication through the friar

THE LIFE OF DANTE

who was the bearer of the letter, and in the letter itself. The conjecture which I venture to interpolate at this point is, that the correspondence did not end here; that Dante and the Cardinal continued to act together; that it was the former who directed his attention to Henry of Luxemburg as a candidate for the Empire; that he placed in his hands, as a full statement of the principles on which he was acting, the MS. of the *De Monarchiâ*. This is, I readily allow, only a conjecture. I submit that it is probable enough in itself, and that it explains the chief incidents that follow: probable in itself—for whenever Dante visited Cologne (*H.* xxiii. 63), whether from Paris or from Arles (*H.* ix. 112), his natural route would take him by way of Luxemburg and Treves, and so down the Moselle.* His reputation as a scholar and a poet, still more perhaps as a skilled physician, would commend him to the notice of the medico-ecclesiastic

* The reference to the beaver in *H.* xvii. 21, indicates either the Moselle or the Rhine. There is no indication that Dante travelled to the Elbe, the Danube, or the Weser, the other *habitats* of that animal (Cuvier, *Règne Anim.*), and it was not indigenous in Italy or France.

THE DREAM AND AWAKENING

who afterwards became Archbishop of Mayence. He would, at least, hear of the good government of Henry's territory, and of his fame as a pattern of all knightly excellence. He may have seen him or heard of his character, and been impressed by the promise which he then gave of future excellence. The poet's capacity for admiration led him to idealise him, as he had previously idealised Charles Martel (*Par.* viii. 49-57). I find in Dante, on this hypothesis, the master-mind that was working behind the scenes and pulling the wires that moved the puppets in the great drama which was now unfolding. It was natural, almost inevitable, that it should be so. An exile is, by the necessity of the case, almost always a conspirator. He schemes for his own return to his fatherland and for the triumph of his party. The aristocrats and democrats of Greek and Italian republics, Protestants and Catholics in the struggles of the Reformation, Royalists in Holland during the Commonwealth, Republicans in the same country under the Stuarts, Jacobites, Non-Jurors, *Emigrés*, Italian and Spanish refugees from Bourbon tyranny—

THE LIFE OF DANTE

all these take their places in the great induction. And in proportion to his brain-power, the exile is tempted to think that he can move the springs of the world's history, impel statesmen to work out his plans, countermine the schemes of kings. To follow the underground workings of a man like Kossuth or Mazzini in the nineteenth century is to gain some insight into the action and character of Dante in the fourteenth.

The plot opened well. Henry was, as we have seen, elected on November 7, 1308. The news came to Italy. On any supposition, Dante must have heard of it with the most intense eagerness. On the provisional working hypothesis which I have stated, he felt called on to complete the work he had begun. The old feeling doubtless came over him, "If I go, who is to remain? if I remain, who is there to go?" but he decided to go, as he had decided when he went to encounter Boniface at Rome. It was his part, he deemed, to be the guiding prophet of the new empire, which for him was also the new theocracy (*Epp.* 5, 6; *Mon. passim*).

THE DREAM AND AWAKENING

And so we come to the journey of 1309 indicated in the Ilarian letter, made ostensibly, perhaps, for the purpose of visiting the University of Paris, as he had done before, but really to watch the movements of the French king and his brother, on whom he looked as the incarnation of all evil, and whom he desired, as far as lay in his power, to thwart, and to take such action as might seem desirable. So far, when Dante crossed the Alps, all was going on well. Henry had been crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle. His election had been recognised by the Pope. Two legates, the Cardinal da Prato, as we have seen, being one, were named to prepare for his reception in Italy. At or about this time, I find reason to believe, he had a personal interview with Henry, of which he has himself given an account. I fix the date of that interview as prior to the arrival of the representatives of the Ghibelline exiles at Lausanne, when Henry was about to start on his great expedition (*Vill.* ix. 7), for two reasons: (1) that the tone in which Dante writes to him (*Ep.* 7) is that of one who had a right to speak to him as Samuel spoke to

THE LIFE OF DANTE

Saul when he spared Agag and the Amalekites, who had, that is, bidden him to enter on his work as a divine mission; (2) that the language which he uses in the same letter as to Henry's son, Prince John of Bohemia, as the "young Ascanius" who was to carry on his father's work, implies, in a man like Dante, a personal knowledge, and that prince did not join his father in the Italian expedition. Where the meeting took place I cannot say—probably at Constance, where Henry held his court in 1309 (*Menzel*, v. 109). He tells us that at that meeting—the most memorable in his life since he stood face to face with Boniface VIII.—he was profoundly impressed with the Emperor's clemency and benignity; that his spirit had rejoiced within him; that he said within himself, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world!"* Of that new Messiah he was himself to be, as a second Baptist, the herald and the forerunner. He

* The words, thus applied, sound to us as almost on the verge of blasphemy, but we must remember that they had been used before by the envoys from Palermo who were sent to Pope Martin IV. to implore his forgiveness after the Sicilian Vespers (*Vill.* vii. 63).

THE DREAM AND AWAKENING

had foiled Philip on his own ground, had found a shelter even in the wood (Avignon or France?) to which the giant had dragged the harlot, with whom he was wroth because she had looked on Dante with a glance of favour (*Purg.* xxxii. 159).

All this, of course, meant that he had found in Henry one who accepted *en bloc* his views on the theory of the Empire, as set forth in the *De Monarchiâ*. The hour and the man had at last come, and the dream was within a measurable distance of becoming a reality. One who reads the treatise in its connexion with Dante's life will see that it was much more than an abstract speculation. Like Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, which begins, as it does, with speculations on the ground of all knowledge, the foundation of all ethics, and the nature of all government, it was distinctly a "Tract for the Times," as much a political manifesto as Mr. Gladstone's volume on the *Relations of Church and State*, or Burke's *Thoughts on the French Revolution*. And the book itself presents so many coincidences of thought with the closing Cantos of the

THE LIFE OF DANTE

Purgatory, that, though it may have been begun before, it must have been completed at the same time. There is the same allusion to Constantine's donation (*Purg.* xxxii. 125; *Mon.* iii. 10), the same imagery of the Earthly Paradise (*Purg.* xxviii.; *Mon.* iii. 15), the same assertion that the authority of the Emperor is co-ordinate with that of the Pope, not dependent on it (*Purg.* xvi. 107; *Mon.* iii. 1). The stress laid on the thought that God alone elects and confirms the Emperor, the so-called electors being but the interpreters of His providence (*Mon.* iii. 15), is obviously connected with Henry's election. The somewhat hurried admission "that in some things the Emperor may be subject to the Pope, that the attitude of the Emperor to the Pope was that of a first-born son to his father" (*Mon.* iii. 15), reads like an after-thought, inserted, it may be, to disarm Clement V.'s suspicions, or soothe the orthodox sensitiveness of the Cardinal da Prato. Even the apparently purely physical speculation as to the cause of the moon's spots in *Par.* ii. has a bearing on the great controversy. The Pope's partisans urged that the

THE DREAM AND AWAKENING

two "great lights" of Gen. i. 16 were symbols of the Church and the State. The moon, they urged, borrows its light from the sun; so does the State its authority from the Church. "No," is Dante's reply; "I admit the analogy—I deny the fact." The moon shines (so Roger Bacon may have taught him) by its own inherent luminosity (*Par.* ii. 147 n.). As it was, all Henry's words and acts from the date of this assumed interview were in strict accordance with the teaching of the thinker, who was, on this hypothesis, his master. The first of those acts is not directly connected with Dante's life or with Italian history, but it has too deep an interest for all who sympathise with men's struggles for freedom to be passed over. It was at Constance in 1309 that Henry formally recognised the comparative independence of the three Swiss cantons, Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden, as holding immediately from the Emperor, and so released them, as far as his action went, from the tyranny of the house of Hapsburg, against which they had risen under Melchthal, Stauffacher, and Fürst. Such an

THE LIFE OF DANTE

act was, it need hardly be said, an example of the

"Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos,"

of Dante's great instructor (*Æn.* vi. 854), which he quotes in *Mon.* ii. 7 as part of his ideal of a righteous ruler. The story of William Tell, which connects itself with that revolt, may be historical or legendary. It will be welcome, I think, to many students of Dante to learn that they may legitimately connect his name with the struggle for freedom of which it has become the symbol. If Dante, as I conjecture, was at Constance, he may have met there the three great patriot heroes of Switzerland.

The intentions which Henry announced on starting for his Italian expedition are couched in the same tone. He speaks as though Dante were at his side prompting him. He came to restore peace to a country that was torn by factions and wars. When he looked on the plains of Italy, he fell on his knees and gave God thanks that he was nearing the fulfilment of his task (*Menzel*, v. 119). He was

THE DREAM AND AWAKENING

received as an angel of God at Asti and Susa (*D. C.* iii. 303). When he entered Milan on December 26, 1311, he made a solemn declaration that he came to win the blessing of the peace-makers, to restore the exiles of both parties, to reconcile the long-standing quarrels of the Guelphs and Ghibellines (*D. C. ibid.*). He would not act as belonging to either party, but would be the impartial friend of both. We seem to hear an echo of the Dantean language of the treaty of Lunigiana. The Emperor and his instructor were alike dreaming of a golden age, *Astræa redux*, a reign of righteousness and peace. Some words spoken by Henry at Lausanne (*Vill.* ix. 7) reveal a more personal element in Dante's expectations. No envoys met the Emperor there from Florence. He expressed his wonder. The Florentine exiles, who were there in full force, explained that probably the Florentines had not learnt to trust him. "They do ill," he replied; "our intention is one of good-will to all the Florentines without respect of parties, and to make that city our residence (*camera*), the noblest city of our empire." This, then,

THE LIFE OF DANTE

was what Dante pictured to himself, with that glowing zeal for a city rather than for a country which has been characteristic of most Italian politicians, in his visions of the future. The fair city which he loved was to rise to a new greatness, the daughter of Rome was to be *matre pulchrâ filia pulchrior*; and he was to be recognised as the great benefactor, the true patriot, crowned with the laurel wreath as the *vates sacer* of the new theocracy (*Par.* xxv. 1-9), figuratively, at least, "with crown and mitre on his brow" (*Purg.* xxvii. 142), guiding the Universal Empire by his supreme insight both to an earthly and a heavenly blessedness, himself, as in some sense king and priest, by the side of the Emperor, who himself was literally crowned with both crown and mitre, according to the Roman ritual, in St. John Lateran. Alas for the irony of events which such visions made inevitable! It would have been well if the Florentine poet, who studied, and so often quoted, the words of Jeremiah, whose life and character present many parallels to those of that prophet, had done as did another *exul immeritus* of a later age. Exiled,

THE DREAM AND AWAKENING

if not from his country, yet from his home, and from the flock for which he would have laid down his life, Ken took for his watchword, when tempted by the prospects of restored greatness and kingly favour, the warning words which were spoken to the prophet's scholar, *Et tu quæris tibi grandia? Noli quærere*.* We, at all events, as we trace the events of the years that follow in Dante's life, seem to find no words that sum them up so fully and exhaustively as those which follow: "Behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the Lord; but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey," that, and that only, "in all places whither thou goest" (*Jer.* xlv. 5).

So far as those events belong to European history generally, they may be briefly epitomised. How Henry received the iron crown † of Lombardy, not at Monza, but at Milan, in

* The text is found in two books, a *Grotius de Veritate* and a Greek Testament, used by him at this period of his life.

† Not, however, the historical iron crown, which had been pledged by Guido della Torre to a Jew, but one made of iron, mounted in gold and set with gems, made on purpose (*Irmer*, p. 42).

THE LIFE OF DANTE

the Church of St. Ambrose, how the envoys came to him from most of the cities of Italy, with the notable exception of the Guelph league, of which Florence was the head ; how he sent his imperial vicars to the cities, with the same exception ; how he was detained for three months by internal troubles at Milan ; how, in April 1311, he took Vicenza and Cremona, and laid siege to Brescia in May ; how his brother fell in that siege, and his troops were wasted with pestilence till they were reduced to one-fourth of their original number ; how in October he entered Genoa, and there lost his beloved and saintly wife ; how the ambassadors whom he sent to Florence were insulted and dismissed ; how Brescia again revolted ; how Robert, king of Naples, secretly prompted by the Pope, openly took part with the Florentine league ; how the Emperor sailed from Genoa to Pisa on the 6th of March 1312, and remained there till the 22nd of April, expecting reinforcements from Germany ; how the troops of Robert and his allies forced their way to Rome, and occupied the Castle of St. Angelo and the Vatican in order to prevent his

THE DREAM AND AWAKENING

coronation ; how that ceremony was performed by the Cardinal da Prato in the Church of St. John Lateran on August 1 ; how, after a short sojourn at Tivoli, he led his forces into Tuscany, and was received with honour at Arezzo ; how he failed to push a victory which he gained over the Florentines, and besieged the city in September, laying waste the country round up to the end of October ; how his health, already weakened at Brescia, began to give way ; how he was compelled by another epidemic to raise the siege, and returned to Pisa in March 1313 ; how he left on the minds of all men the impression of a character that was never cast down by adversity or elated by prosperity ; how he formally summoned Robert of Naples to take his trial as a traitor, condemned him, and started from Pisa to carry his sentence into effect ; how he had the promise of help by sea from Frederick of Aragon, king of Sicily, and from the Genoese ; how, after halting at Siena, he encamped on the famous field of Montaperti, fell ill, tried the baths of Moncereto without effect, stopped at Buonconvento, and there died, poisoned

THE LIFE OF DANTE

some said, by a Dominican friar in the consecrated wafer, on August 24th; how he was buried with all honours in the Cathedral of Pisa, where his tomb still remains in the Campo Santo—all this may be read in full in the Chronicles of Villani, in the memoirs (genuine or apocryphal) that bear the name of Dino Campagni, yet more exhaustively in Irmer's elaborate monograph *Die Romfahrt des Kaiser Heinrich's VII.** It might seem almost as if his ill-fortune pursued him even after death. One might have hoped that the sculptor's art would have presented the monumental calm which seems to say, "After life's fitful fever he sleeps well." As it is, Ampère's criticism on the recumbent form is "*Il a l'air de dormir mal.*" Canon Creighton (*Macmillan's Magazine*, March 1874, p. 561) describes the face, with "its broad head, finely-cut features, and delicate chin," as that of a "dreamer who would never have unravelled the tangled web of Italian politics."

Irmer's book, which reaches me as these sheets are passing through the press, deserves a fuller notice, which I reserve for a note at the close.

THE DREAM AND AWAKENING

What concerns us now is to note the points of contact which this history presents with Dante's life; how he acted at its several stages; how far we may trace his direct or indirect influence in it. Of these I select the most conspicuous instances. It is noticeable from the first that Dante's personal friends are among the Emperor's most devoted and most honoured adherents. Can Grande of Verona, Moroello Malaspini, the Counts Guidi of Casentino, were made imperial vicars or otherwise promoted. Even Cino of Pistoia, though only a man of letters, was made assessor to Count Louis of Savoy, whom the Emperor had named as senator of Rome (*Weg.* p. 231). Looking to Dante's relations with the Polentas of Ravenna, I venture to trace his influence in the part taken by the Archbishop of that city in bringing about the surrender of Cremona (*Vill.* ix. 15). In the readiness shown by the Venetians to pay their homage to the Emperor, and even in the form which that homage took—a silver-gilt throne and a crown of gold, each set with precious stones (*Vill.* ix. 14)—I find traces, in like

THE LIFE OF DANTE

manner, of the artistic imagination which desired to invest the Emperor with all the outward magnificence which was fit for his ideal greatness, perhaps also of Dante's influence with Marco Polo and the other wealthy merchants of Venice. The fact that he was chosen afterwards by Guido da Polenta to negotiate a treaty with the Venetians falls in with the hypothesis that he had previous relations with them (comp. *H.* xxi. 7 *n.*). In the vision of the throne and the crown reserved for Henry in Paradise, as for one who had been before his time (*Par.* xxx. 133), I find an allusion of singular pathos to the crown and throne (probably those just mentioned) which were used at the Emperor's coronation in the Church of St. John Lateran.

Of Dante's own activity we have direct evidence in the series of letters that have fortunately come down to us. In dealing with them, however, we must remember, as in all such cases, from St. Paul's Epistles onward, that what we have is not the measure of the extent of his correspondence, which at this time, probably indeed throughout his life, was

THE DREAM AND AWAKENING

energetic and incessant. Filelfo, though not a very trustworthy authority, was probably right when he wrote of Dante "*Edidit et epistolas innumerabiles.*" The first of those connected with this period (*Ep.* 8) is addressed by him as "*humilis Italus*" (the phrase reminds us of *H.* i. 106) "*et exul immeritus,*"* to all and singular the kings of Italy, to the senators *almæ urbis* (*i.e.*, Rome), to all dukes, marquises, counts, and people. In its lofty idealism, of which Milton's *Address to the Lords and Commons of England* but faintly reminds us, it is little short of the proclamation of a new Messiah by his forerunner, at least the proclamation of a new Cyrus-Messiah by another

* Three fragments are given by Filelfo, the opening words of letters to the King of Hungary and to Boniface VIII., and to his son when studying at Bologna. The second of these belongs apparently to the time when he was working with the Pope (p. 94). The last is worth quoting now: "*Scientia, mi fili, coronat homines et eos contentos reddit, quam cupiunt sapientes, honorant boni, vituperant mali.*" Other fragments, given by Bruni, in which he speaks of his election as Prior as the starting-point of all his troubles, and refers to his emotions at the battle of Campaldino, have also been referred to in pp. 57, 84. Bruni also speaks of a letter to the people of Florence beginning, "*Popule meus, quid tibi feci?*" which is probably identical with that mentioned in *Vill.* ix. 136.

THE LIFE OF DANTE

Isaiah (*Isai.* xlv. 1). "Now is the acceptable time; the new day is dawning on the people who had dwelt in the wilderness. Those who hunger and thirst shall be filled with the light of his beams." The "strong lion of the tribe of Judah" (the Unseen King) has heard the wailings of his people, and has raised up another Moses to lead them out of Egypt into a land flowing with milk and honey. Italy, whom the very Saracens have pitied, is "to welcome her bridegroom, Henry the Compassionate, *Divus et Augustus et Caesar*," who is hastening to the wedding-feast. He shall smite the wicked with the edge of the sword and shall let out the vineyard (Florence?) to other husbandmen, who shall render the fruits of righteousness in due season, but will also be ready to pardon all who ask for mercy. The seed of the Lombards is called on to lay aside its inherited barbarism; that of the Trojans and Latins (*Purg.* xxxii. 113) is to submit to the Eagle of Heaven (*Par.* vi. 1-9). They are to guard against the greed of gain, which, "after the manner of the Sirens" (*Purg.* xix., 19, xxxi. 45), narcotises the watchfulness of

THE DREAM AND AWAKENING

Reason. They will find that in resisting the Empire they resist the ordinance of God. To resist that is to kick against the pricks. To others he turns, in the very language of Jeremiah, bidding them break up their fallow-ground, that, like a fertile valley, they may be clothed with the verdure of peace (*Jer. iv. 3*). Those who have shared the poet's wrongs are to follow him in forbearance ("*parcite, parcite jam ex nunc, carissimi*"). Peace was ready for all who sought it. The Hectorean shepherd (we note the Trojan idea as still dominant) will gather in his strayed sheep into his fold. In him they were to see the predestinated ruler of the world, a predestination traced in the history of Troy and Rome, working through stellar influences and human instruments (*Mon. ii.*). Peter, the Vicar of God, had taught obedience to Cæsar; Clement, the successor of Peter, had recognised Henry and had given him his apostolic benediction.

The letter had probably a wider circulation at the time than any other of Dante's writings. It would be sent by special messengers to all

THE LIFE OF DANTE

the princes, nobles, chieftains, to whom it was addressed. It was written in the first glow of an enthusiastic hope, probably, I infer (for it is undated), between the time of Henry's departure from Lausanne and his passage of Mont Cenis. It belongs obviously to the same period as the apocalyptic vision of *Purg.* xxxii., xxxiii., and furnishes the key to its interpretation. Henry was the DVX who was to slay the harlot of the Roman Curia and her giant paramour. I conjecture that this letter was, in the case of Florence, accompanied, or shortly followed, by that which began *Popule meus, quid tibi feci*, an opening which strikes the keynote of pathetic remonstrance rather than of wrathful threatenings.

The proclamation of the new Baptist was but partially successful. It attracted, as we have already seen, those who were already Dante's associates, but others, notably Florence and her confederates, held aloof and began to organise resistance. The result was another letter from the *exul immeritus* to the *scelestissimi Florentini*, couched in very different terms. It is dated March 31, 1312, from *in finibus Tusciæ*,
186

THE DREAM AND AWAKENING

sub fontem Sarni, probably, *i.e.*, from the Casentino, where Dante was staying with the Counts Guidi, waiting for news from Milan. It begins with repeating the assertion that the restoration of the Empire was the end to which God's providence was working. Without it the whole world was going wrong; the pilot and the sailors in the bark of Peter were asleep (comp. *Purg.* xxxii. 129, and the *Navicella* of Giotto in St. Peter's at Rome). He threatens the Florentines, as rebels against it, with the terrors of the "second death" (*H.* i. 117). He objects to their argument from the prescription of long-standing usage against the authority of the Emperor. They were setting up the polity (*civilitas*) of Florence against that of imperial Rome, taking licence for liberty. They had chosen to cast aside the true fear of God; they must be taught by the fear of man. They were trusting in their new fortifications (we are reminded of *Isai.* xxii. 9-11), and the eagle, terrible in its field of gold, would fly upon them, as it had flown over the Pyrenees, Caucasus, Atlas (*Par.* vi. 1-84), and pour out its righteous wrath upon them. They did not

THE LIFE OF DANTE

choose to yield to the Divine Will ; they would have to work it out without their choosing. He, in his divining soul, saw the city given up to slaughter, its churches plundered, wailing women and children in the streets, the greater part of the people slain by the sword or driven into exile. Florence was to become another Saguntum. Did they flatter themselves that they might resist Henry as Parma had resisted Frederick II. ? Let them remember the fate of Milan and Spoleto under Frederick Barbarossa. To those who had eyes to see they were as men blind, in a dark prison-house, repelling one who came in the fulness of his mercy to set them free. Their covetousness was cheating them with deceitful hopes and false fears. Let them obey the laws of the Empire and they would find that their service was perfect freedom. Finally, as if reserving his sharpest word for the last, he reviles them as the wretched progeny of the men of Fiesole (*H.* xv. 62), and calls them to repent before it be too late. Henry is coming, *divus et triumphator*, seeking not his own good, but that of the world at large, "encountering all

THE DREAM AND AWAKENING

difficulties for us, of his own free-will bearing our penalties." Isaiah's words were, after their first fulfilment in the Christ, meant for him. "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." He dates his letter significantly as written in the day before the kalends of April, in "the first year of the prosperous campaign of the Emperor Henry."

Prosperous! Alas for the irony of history! Neither threats nor promises availed. The Florentines became conspicuous as the leaders of the league of Tuscany and Romagna, supplied their allies liberally with money, and renewed their condemnation of the exiles. And as yet Henry came not. He had been detained at Milan, as we have seen, till April 1311. The last tidings that had reached Dante were that he had gathered his forces with the intention of attacking Cremona (*Vill.* ix. 14). The impatience of the exile could no longer restrain itself; that "hope delayed" was more than he could bear. If no one else was bold enough to rebuke the Emperor, he must take that office on himself. And so he sends what

THE LIFE OF DANTE

is, perhaps, the boldest letter ever written by poet or prophet to a king. The comparison which he himself draws of Samuel's rebuke of Saul furnishes the nearest, almost the only, analogue, unless, perhaps, we reckon Mazzini's letter to Charles Albert as another. He writes in the name of all the Tuscans who desire peace. He and they "kiss the feet" of the Emperor. He begins by complaining that the great enemy of mankind is once again at work to thwart the good purpose of God. When Henry had crossed the Apennines (we note that the term is generalised to include Mont Cenis), very many had hailed his coming as heralding the "*saturnia regna*," the "*virginem reducem*" of Virgil's prophecies (*Ecl.* iv.). Now he was lingering and the wheels of his chariot tarried. Like another Baptist (Luke vii. 19), Dante and his friends were constrained to ask the question, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" Was this the outcome of that interview where he had literally kissed his feet, and inwardly welcomed him as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world"? They could not under-

THE DREAM AND AWAKENING

stand this delay, as though the Empire did not take in Florence, and were confined within the limits of Liguria. Meanwhile the tyrants of Tuscany were daily growing haughtier and more malignant. It was time to say the words which had been spoken to Cæsar—we remember that Dante (*H.* xxviii. 93) had placed the speaker of those words in one of the lowest Bolgie—

“Tolle moras; semper nocuit differre paratis.”

It was time, too, to urge the warning which summoned Æneas from his spell-bound lingering at Carthage, if not for his own sake, yet for that of the young Ascanius (*Æn.* iv. 272), and to remind the Emperor that he too had an Ascanius in his son, Prince John of Bohemia. He was called, as Saul had been, to smite Agag and Amalek till they were utterly destroyed. What good was it to stay at Milan, striking off the heads of the hydra one by one, to lop the branches of the tree when the axe should be laid to its roots? Florence was the fox's den, and she drank the poisonous waters of the Arno (*Purg.* xiv. 19-54). She was the viper

THE LIFE OF DANTE

that stung her mother, the tainted sheep that spread infection through the flock, the Myrrha whose attempt to lure the Pope to embrace her cause was an incestuous intrigue with her spiritual father. Yes, the offspring of Jesse should delay no longer, should put his trust in the Lord God of Sabaoth, should slay the giant Goliath, so that the darkness of night might cover the camp of the Philistines and the true Israel be restored to freedom. Only so could the sorrow of those Israelites be turned into joy. As it was, they were groaning as exiles at Babylon, remembering Jerusalem.

Henry, as we have seen, did not come with the speed to which Dante urged him, and as regards the attack on Florence, on which Dante's heart was set, the expedition, when he did start, was a failure. How Dante passed the months that came between the date of the letter and the Emperor's death we can only conjecture. It would seem probable that he joined him as soon as he came within the limits of Tuscany; that he was with him, with a revived hope that at last victory was near,

THE DREAM AND AWAKENING

at the coronation in St. John Lateran*—we can imagine with what feelings he would once again tread the streets of the Eternal City—that he was present also at that which brought to his hopes what he would have described as their “second death.” In that grave in the Cathedral of Pisa were buried all the far-reaching schemes over which he had been brooding for at least four years. And, as he looked on the corpse of the Emperor with its *air de dormir mal*, he must have felt that it was almost, if not altogether, his doing. Through him that life, the noblest he had ever known, had been brought to an untimely end, and with it had finished all hopes of the theocratic empire. Of all forms of discipline for such a nature as Dante’s, that was the hardest to bear. We cannot wonder that there should come with it all the signs of a premature old age; that his stoop, as he walked,

* I have already referred (p. 176) to the “crown and mitre” of *Purg.* xxvii. 142, as probably suggested by the ritual of the coronation. *Par.* xxxi. 31-36, in like manner, may well be a reminiscence of the impression by the Lateran and its ceremonial on the Emperor’s German troops.

THE LIFE OF DANTE

should become more and more perceptible, his beard and face more swarth and grizzled, as of the man who had seen Hell; his fits of protracted silence and absorbed introspection more frequent, his temper more saturnine and irritable, more impatient of folly and frivolity. He may have found some gleam of comfort in the thought that there was a throne and crown in Paradise for the hero whom he had tempted to an enterprise for which as yet Italy was not ripe (*Par.* xxx. 136), in the hope, eternal and indestructible, that the Italy "worthy of triumphal fame" (*Canz.* xx.) would one day be truer to her high calling, and in some sense "*farebbe da se.*" For the present, however, he had at best to accept the inevitable, and to stand "four-square to the strokes of fortune" (*Par.* xvii. 24). We may rest in the belief that by slow degrees he found his way through darkness to light. Exile was bitter. The poverty of the exile—and the failure of the enterprise on which he had staked everything must have deepened that poverty—must have been more bitter still. The stain of infamy still clung to his name,

THE DREAM AND AWAKENING

and wherever he went, the ill-natured and the gossips might point to him as the man who had been banished for embezzlement and sentenced to the flames for contumacy. The exiles from whom he had always held aloof in scorn, the Cerchi, Uberti, Salterelli, would look with no kindly feelings on the man who had wrecked their hopes. It was something to be able to say at such a time, "*Lascia dir le genti*" (*Purg.* v. 13). It was more, over and above the partial mitigations of the bitterness of exile which will meet us farther on, that he could find strength for the completion of his colossal task, which for well-nigh twenty years had been wearing out health and strength. We may believe that it would scarcely have been completed as it was but for the seeming failure which cast him, after the shipwreck of his highest earthly hopes, upon the rock-bound coast and the howling wilderness. As it was, he turned, as others have turned before and after him, against hope to yet higher hope, and found his faith deepened and purified by the discipline through which he had been led. He who had vainly sought for peace as he

THE LIFE OF DANTE

knocked at the gate of the monastery of Santa Croce learnt to say, as he put his trust in the Eternal, with the dwellers in Paradise (*Par.* iii. 85)—

"In la sua volontade è nostra pace."

WANDERINGS AND DEATH

THE facts of Dante's life after the death of Henry become more and more difficult to fix. More and more did he take his own solitary course (*Par.* xvii. 69). There are no traces of his taking any part in the action of the Ghibelline party at Pisa or elsewhere, and we are left to local traditions and inferential conjectures. The most credible of these represents him as finding a refuge at Gubbio in the house of a Ghibelline friend, Bosone de' Raffaelli, or in his castle, six miles from the town. The name of Bosone, it will be remembered, has already met us as the third in the triad of friends, of whom the other two were Dante and Immanuel ben Salomo (p. 120). An inscription attests the fact in the words, *Hic mansit Dantes Alagherius poeta et carmina scripsit*, but the date and authority of the inscription are open to question, and a sonnet

THE LIFE OF DANTE

which is shown at Gubbio as having been addressed by Dante to his friend stands on much the same footing. The vividness of the description of the monastery of Santa Croce di Fonte Avellana, in the territory of Gubbio, in *Par.* xxi. 106, gives some colour to the tradition, also attested by an inscription, dated 1557, in what is pointed out as his cell in the monastery, that he took refuge in the wild solitude of these regions and there "composed no small portion of his great work" (*Frat. V. D.* 219). It seems, at any rate, in harmony with Dante's character that he should seek, after the great catastrophe of Henry's death, for solitude and peace. In that wild and gloomy region, in the stern discipline of the Camaldolese monks he would find what was most congenial to his temperament and the discipline which he most needed.

We seem to stand on somewhat firmer ground when we come across a letter bearing the date of March 30, 1314, addressed by Dante to Guido da Polenta, Lord of Ravenna (*Ep.* viii.). We may infer from it that he had been sent to congratulate the Venetians on their election

WANDERINGS AND DEATH

of Giovanni Soranzo as Doge. It is in Italian, and begins abruptly enough, if indeed we have the beginning at all. He could have believed anything rather than what he has actually seen in the great State to which he has been sent. He had looked for a senate of Catos, lofty, high-minded, *rerum dominos, gentemque togatam*, as compared with the parties and factions of other Italian cities. He had found a people oppressed and misgoverned by new-made rulers subverting ancient laws. He had found also an "obtuse and bestial ignorance." He had begun a Latin oration to them in his best style. He might as well have done so at the Antipodes. Scarcely had he begun his exordium, *Lux orta est justo et rectis latitia*, when he was told that he must either look out for an interpreter or talk Italian. Surprised and indignant, he began a few sentences in what he thought was his mother tongue, Italian as he had learnt to speak it. It was scarcely more intelligible to the senators of Venice than his Latin had been. When he came to think of it, he wondered less. What else could be expected of the descendants of Dalmatians and

THE LIFE OF DANTE

Greeks? He only begs that his honoured lord (Guido da Polenta) will never send him there on a like embassy again. The letter, if genuine, has the merit of introducing a gleam of the humorous element into the tragedy of Dante's life. I picture the whole scene to myself as one worthy of an artist's study—the "potent, grave, and reverend signiors" sitting in their stately senate-house, the scholar-poet starting grandiloquently, rudely interrupted, burning with indignation. Unhappily, the letter has been rejected by some experts, including Witte, as a forgery. As usual in such cases, there are, however, experts, including Fraticelli, on the other side. *Adhuc sub judice lis est*, and I have no *data* to decide it. On the whole, the apparently trivial character of the letter seems to me in favour of its genuineness. A forger would probably have aimed at something loftier, with a less abrupt opening. Probably what we now have is but a portion of a letter written originally in Latin.

The next document is one the authenticity of which has not been disputed, and it deals with events of greater magnitude. Clement V.

WANDERINGS AND DEATH

had died (April 20, 1314), near Carpentras, about sixteen miles from Avignon, and, according to custom, the Cardinals who were there held their conclave at the former city for the election of his successor. The question who that successor was to be was one which naturally agitated the mind of Christendom, specially of the Italian Cardinals, above all of the idealist Ghibelline poet, who was then probably in the monastery of Fonte Avellana. The Italian Cardinals, as we have seen, under the guidance of Orsini and Da Prato, had chosen Clement in the belief that they would find him pliant, and not disinclined to a conciliatory policy towards the moderate Ghibellines. They had been bitterly disappointed. At first, indeed, in the matter of Henry's election, they had found him willing to act with them, but the pressure put on him by Philip the Fair had thwarted their policy. He had made himself the tool of the French king in the suppression of the Templars, with all its monstrous cruelties. He was conspicuous for an all-grasping avarice. He had filled up all vacancies in the Curia with his own Gascon favourites; and when he

THE LIFE OF DANTE

died, there were but six Italians to seventeen foreigners in the conclave. What their views were—and their views must largely, in the nature of the case, have been shared by Dante—are so well and so concisely expressed by Dean Milman (*L. C.* vii. 334), that I cannot do better than reproduce them :—

“With them the primary object was the restoration of the Papacy to Rome. The most sober might tremble lest the Papal authority should hardly endure the continued, if not perpetual, avulsion of the Popedom from its proper seat. Would Christendom stand in awe of a Pope only holding the Bishopric of Rome as a remote appanage to the Pontificate, only nominally seated on the actual throne of St. Peter, in a cathedral unennobled, unhallowed by any of the ancient or sacred traditions of the Cæsarean, the pontifical city? Would it endure a Pope setting a flagrant example of non-residence to the whole ecclesiastical order; no longer an independent sovereign in the capital of the Christian world, amid the patri-mony claimed as the gift of Constantine and

WANDERINGS AND DEATH

Charlemagne, but lurking in an obscure city, in a narrow territory, and that territory not his own? Avignon was in Provence, which Charles of Anjou had obtained in right of his wife. The land had descended to his son, Charles II. of Naples; on the death of Charles, to the ruling sovereign, Robert of Naples. The Neapolitan Angevine house had still maintained the community of interests with the parent monarchy; and this territory of Provence, Avignon itself, was environed nearly on all sides by the realm of France—that realm whose king, not yet dead, had persecuted a Pope to death, persecuted him after death.”

At this crisis the Cardinal Napoleon, of the great house of the Orsini, addressed a letter to the King of France, expressing his own regret, and that of the other Italian Cardinals, at the part they had taken in the election of Clement V., and dwelling in strong terms on the vices of his character, his nepotism, his avarice,* the

* Our records at Wells Cathedral furnish some indication of the way in which Clement enriched himself. On May 3, 1314, I find the Dean and Chapter, as collectors of a tithe

THE LIFE OF DANTE

evils he had brought upon the Church. "They had never contemplated the removal of the Holy See from the sanctuary of the Apostles" (Milm. *L. C.* vii. 335).

At this juncture, probably before the letter just quoted, Dante addressed a letter (it has come to us undated) to the Italian Cardinals at Carpentras, reminding them of their duty. He had, on the hypothesis I have suggested, taken part, not without effect, in the election of an Emperor. It was natural that he should think himself called on to intervene in the election of a Pope. The failure of the scheme for the reformation of Italy, and the return of the Florentine exiles, connected with the former, did not exclude the hope of achieving something through the latter. A Pope, guided by Orsini and Da Prato, returning to Rome with

for six years, ordered by Pope Clement for the recovery of the Holy Land, giving a receipt for £200 paid to them for that purpose (*Report on MSS. of Wells*, p. 74, 1885). This was, apparently, the crusade contemplated by Henry VII. That crusade never came off, but the money from Wells, and, we may believe, from all parts of Europe, found its way to the Papal coffers (comp. Milm. *L. C.* vii. 369). The Bardi, as noted above (p. 48), were the collectors of this money in Somersetshire.

WANDERINGS AND DEATH

the lessons taught by the experience of Avignon, might be a potent element for good. The letter begins with a quotation from Dante's favourite prophet. "How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people! How is she become as a widow that was the mistress of the nations!" (*Lam.* i. 1; comp. *V. N. c.* 31). What Jeremiah had thus painted, what had been fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, was now the state of Rome. The very Jews and Saracens (*Purg.* xxiii. 103; *Par.* v. 31) mocked at her, asking, "Where is now their God?" What made matters worse was that astrologers read in this the decree of an inevitable destiny, as though the influences of the stars overpowered the free-will of man (*Purg.* xvi. 67-84). He, for his part, was compelled to throw the blame on the princes in the first rank of the Church. They had neglected to drive the chariot of the Bridegroom in the track of the Crucified One (*Purg.* xxx. 107), and had wandered out of the way like another Phæthon (*Purg.* xxix. 118). They had turned their backs and not their faces to that chariot, and had offered strange fire on the altar of the

THE LIFE OF DANTE

Lord. They were like those who of old bought and sold in the Temple. They had taken part, history repeating itself, as with Demetrius (Philip the Fair?) and Alcimus (Clement V. or the future John XXII.?) against the true Israel of God (1 *Macc.* vii. 9). They might be disposed to look on him, the writer of the letter, as an Uzzah laying his profane hands upon the Ark of God (2 *Sam.* vi. 7). He was quite aware that he was but as one of the least of the sheep of Christ's flock. He had no riches to give him authority, but by the grace of God he was what he was, and he could say with the Psalmist, "The zeal of thine house hath devoured me." "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings" God could bring forth His truth, and the blind man had confessed Christ when the Pharisees denied him. He could say with Aristotle, "*Magis amica veritas*," than all others who might claim his friendship. He might rightly come to the aid of the ark without incurring the sin of Uzzah, for he had seen the bark of Christ struggling with the tempest (*Purg.* xxxii. 129). On all sides there was but one cry of wailing and lament over the sheep

WANDERINGS AND DEATH

that were left untended in their pastures ; yea, every one of them had chosen covetousness and not charity as his bride (*Par.* xi. 58-78). The Spouse of Christ had brought forth children by water and the Spirit to her own shame. Not Astræa, not Charity, but the daughters of the horse-leech (*Prov.* xxx. 15) were her kin. With the one exception of the Bishop of Luni (at this time a Malaspina), all were alike corrupt. The ancient fathers of the Church, Gregory, Ambrose, Augustine, Dionysius, Damascenus, Bede (we note the extent of Dante's own patristic reading and his special reverence for the English historian, *Par.* x. 131), were neglected, and instead men were lecturing on the Decretals that had been brought together under the names of Innocents III. and IV., and the wretched commentaries and epitomes based on them, to which all canonists turned as their guide. He, the writer, did not stand alone. All were whispering and thinking as he did. If they held their peace, the Lord, who had spoken of old by Balaam's ass, would yet find an instrument. He turns to his definite purpose in writing, and brings before them the state of

THE LIFE OF DANTE

Rome, the widowed and bereaved city, deprived of both her luminaries, alike of Emperor and Pope (*Purg.* xvi. 107). He speaks to those especially who have known the sacred Tiber from their infancy, above all to the Cardinal Orsini. He appeals to him so to act that the old foes of his house, the Colonna Cardinals, deprived by Boniface VIII., and only partially restored by Clement V., might re-enter into full possession of their dignities, and to the Cardinal Gaetani, of the family of Boniface VIII., hitherto opposed to them, to lay aside his Transtiberine, *i.e.*, his Guelphic, prejudices. All would be remedied if they would work together to restore the Spouse of Christ to her true seat, and so would work for the good of Rome, of Italy, of the whole company of the pilgrims upon earth. So should they hear a *Gloria in excelsis* (*Purg.* xx. 136); so should the infamy of the Gascons (Clement V.'s Cardinals), foiled and frustrated, become an example to future ages.

One notes, with some wonder, the absence of any special mention of the Cardinal da Prato, with whom we have seen Dante formerly

WANDERINGS AND DEATH

in such full alliance. The inference I draw from the silence is that of him at least he felt sure. The others might want rousing or pressing, but Dante knew that he was simply playing into the hands of the Bishop of Ostia. As it was, his efforts and those of the Cardinals at Carpentras were alike fruitless. After the Papal throne had remained vacant for two years and a half, the choice of the electors fell on the Cardinal of Porto, who took the name of John XXII. He was born in Cahors, the city which had the worst reputation in Europe for its usurers (*H.* xi. 50), and he was worthy of his birthplace. Dante, who saw only the beginning of his Pontificate, placed him also under the same condemnation as Clement (*Par.* xxvii. 58).*

The next point at which we get distinct

* Here again our local records throw light on the greater drama of the world's history. The Register of Bishop Drokenford of Bath and Wells (1309-29) records an order from John XXII. to reserve, on the ever-ready ground of a contemplated crusade and other pious uses, the incomes of forty-six of the best livings in the diocese for the Papal treasury. Fancy that kind of thing going on through the length and breadth of Western Europe !

THE LIFE OF DANTE

that the only Gentucca whom the researches of antiquaries can trace in the archives of Lucca was the wife of Bernardo Morla, of a branch of the Allacingshi family. Well, commentators and biographers of prurient imaginations are, I suppose, "capable of anything." I can conceive men of this class echoing the slanders which were whispered against Hooker when he, in Izaak Walton's phrase, was "trepanned" into circumstances that gave colour for a like accusation, or commenting on Ken's intimacy with the ladies of Naish Court, or the devout young Nonconformist poetess of Frome, as open to grave suspicion. But I confess that if I were a rising young barrister, I should desire nothing better than to hold a brief for the defendant in such a case as this. I should urge that Dante was not a Boccaccio, nor a Byron, not even an Abelard or a Petrarch. I should dwell on the utter absence of evidence beyond the distorted interpretation of Dante's own words, and the absolute incredibility of his perpetuating, in the very poem in which he is describing his purification as a penitent, the memory of a

WANDERINGS AND DEATH

doubly adulterous intrigue. I should represent that the only natural, the only reasonable, almost the only possible, interpretation of his words is that which sees in them the thankful acknowledgment of a pure and sympathising friendship. Crushed and broken down by sorrow, after long months of rigorous, if salutary, discipline at the monastery of Fonte Avellana, the exile finds himself for a short period in something like a home. He meets with a refined and educated lady who can understand him, who can enter into his thoughts as a poet, can listen to the story of his sorrows, and share without jealousy his reverence for Beatrice. And on these grounds I should claim from the jury, as I now claim from those who, now or hereafter, shall read my *Apologia*, a verdict of "Not Guilty," accompanied by the declaration that the accused leaves the court without a stain upon his character.

That sojourn at Lucca, with its pleasant river and fair fields for walks or bathing (*H.* xxi. 49), its memories of the Santo Volto and of Santa Zita (*H.* xxi. 38-48), must have been

THE LIFE OF DANTE

as an oasis in Dante's wanderings in the wilderness of exile. It was not, however, to be his rest. In August 1315, Uguccione—guided, I conceive, by the poet's counsels—resolved on offensive operations against Florence, and advanced so far as to lay siege to Montecatini in the Val di Nievole, within ten miles of that city. The Florentines sent to all their allies for aid, and their language is that of men thoroughly alarmed: "Come over and help us; the need is pressing. A little delay may lead to the greatest danger." The allies came in full force, commanded by the two brothers of Robert of Naples, and the Florentines found themselves with an army of 3200 horse and 25,000 foot. There had been no such battle fought since that in which the waters of the Arbia were crimsoned with the blood of the slain (*H.* x. 86). Uguccione gained a decisive victory. One of the Neapolitan princes was slain. Florence and her allied cities were filled with wailing and lamentation. Dante's health and age (he was now over fifty, and worn with study and with sorrow) may have hindered his taking part in the battle, but the Florentines

WANDERINGS AND DEATH.

seem to have known whom they had to thank for their losses, and in November a third edict of condemnation was issued against him by Ranieri di Zaccaria, King Robert's vicar at Florence. He and his brother exiles who had come within the frontiers of Tuscany, and had not paid the fine which they incurred by so doing, and his sons, are condemned to lose their heads. The mention of the latter is not without interest in its bearing on Dante's life, as showing that some of them, most likely the two eldest, Pietro and Jacopo, were no longer in Florence, but had probably been with their father at Lucca. They would now be about eighteen or twenty, and we can reasonably think of them as trying to understand the workings of the myriad-minded man with whom they were now in contact, possibly as laying up materials for their future exposition of his great work.

The aspect of things, however, changed for the worse. Uguccone, who had lost a son at Montecatini, became suspicious and severe. Prominent citizens at Pisa and at Lucca were beheaded by him and by his son (Podestà of

THE LIFE OF DANTE

the latter), and the population of these cities rose simultaneously in rebellion against them on April 3, 1316, and drove them out. Once more the cup of hope was dashed from the lips of the exile. Uguccione, probably Dante with him, took refuge in the Lunigiana, with one of the ever-hospitable house of Malaspina (*Purg.* viii. 121-132). The Florentines, now free from all immediate danger, made peace with Pisa, elected (October 1316) a more conciliatory Podestà, Count Guido da Battifolle, and in December resolved on something like an amnesty (*Vill.* ix. 71-79). I note the fact that Villani, the historian, was in that year one of the Priori, and negotiated the treaty with Pisa, and think it more than probable that he, Dante's neighbour and friend (*Vill.* ix. 136), not without memories of the time they had spent together at Rome in the year of the Jubilee (*Vill.* viii. 36), had urged the measure with a view to the poet's return. The amnesty, however, was not unconditional. The exiles who availed themselves of the amnesty were to pay a certain sum according to the measure of their guilt, to walk with the malefactor's cap

WANDERINGS AND DEATH

(a kind of paper mitre, like that worn by heretics at an *auto-da-fé* of the Inquisition in Spain) on their heads and holding a wax-taper in their hands behind the chariot of the Mint (I note again that Villani was at this time Master of the Mint at Florence) to the Church of St. John, and there to make an expiatory offering to the saint.¹

The conditions were accepted by many of Dante's companions, who appeared in due form in the procession on the festival of St. John the Baptist, 1317 (June 24th)—the Tosinghi, Rinucci, and others—but he himself would not receive them. It was not thus that he would revisit his "beautiful St. John." The letter in which he conveyed his refusal to a Florentine friend* has often been reprinted, and is probably familiar to most of my readers,

* Two identifications of the friend are possible. He and Dante had the same nephew. (1.) A sister of Dante's was married to Leone Poggi, and had a son, Andrea. The friend may have been a Poggi. (2.) One of his brothers, married to a Piera Brunacci, had a son, Durante, and the friend may have been of that house. Looking to the prominence assigned to Andrea in *Bocc. V. D.*, I slightly incline to (1). In any case, the words "my father" point to an ecclesiastic.

THE LIFE OF DANTE

but it is so eminently characteristic that no life of Dante would be complete without it :—

“I have learnt from your letters, received by me with all due reverence and affection, after careful consideration and with a grateful mind, how fully your heart is set on my return to my country; and I am all the more bound by a strong sense of obligation, since it is rarely the lot of exiles to find friends. Wherefore I make my answer to what they communicate, and if my reply should not be such as the pusillanimity of some would wish, I affectionately entreat you before you condemn it to weigh it well and with mature deliberation.

“Behold then that which, through the letters of your nephew and mine, and of many other friends, has been conveyed to me as to the ordinance recently made at Florence touching the return of the exiles, that, should I be willing to pay a certain sum of money and submit to the degrading ceremony of oblation,*

* Not merely that he would have had to make an expiatory offering, but that his own position would have been that of a criminal, finding, as it were, an asylum in the protection of the Baptist.

WANDERINGS AND DEATH

I may remain as pardoned and forthwith return. Ah! my father, here are two things, to say the truth, ridiculous and ill-considered: I say 'ill-considered' in regard of those who have thus expressed their intentions; for as for your letters, conceived more discreetly and more thoughtfully, they contained nothing of the kind.

"And is this then the glorious manner by which Dante Alighieri is recalled to his country after having endured exile for well-nigh fifteen years? Has his innocence, manifest to all men, has his continual labour and toil in study, deserved this? Far be this ill-advised humility of the earthly heart from one who belongs to the household of philosophy (*H.* iv. 39), that he, after the fashion of a 'Ciolo' (presumably some notorious malefactor, but there is a *v. l. sciolo* = sciolist, pretender, or charlatan), "and other wretches of ill-fame, should, as if admitting defeat, suffer himself to be thus offered. Far be it from one who is a preacher of righteousness, that, having suffered wrong, he should pay money to those who did the wrong, as though they were his benefactors.

"No, my father, this is not my way of re-

THE LIFE OF DANTE

turning to my country (*Par.* xxv. 1-9), but if any other can be discovered, by you or by others, which does not derogate from Dante's fame and honour, I will, with no lingering steps, accept it. But if by such a course there is no entrance to Florence found for me, Florence I will never enter. What? Cannot I everywhere look out on the sun and on the stars? * Can I not, everywhere under heaven, contemplate the truths that are most sweet and precious, unless I first submit myself to the people and state of Florence, stripped of my honour and clothed in ignominy? Bread, I imagine, will not fail me."

The gates of Florence were thus self-closed by the exile against his return. There came, of course—perhaps it had come before—the question where he was to go. Among the Ghibelline leaders who had gathered round Henry of Luxemburg there was, now that Ugucione had fallen from his power, but one man of mark, Francesco, better known as the Can

* We note the parallelism with the fact that each division of the *Commedia* ends with the word "*stelle*."

WANDERINGS AND DEATH

Grande della Scala of Verona, who by the death of his father Albert (1301) and his brothers Bartholomew (1304) and Alboino (1311) was now lord of that city. He had been made an Imperial Vicar by Henry, and in 1318 was chosen as leader of the Ghibelline party. Dante had probably seen him in one or more passing visits in the early years of his exile (1303 or 1308), when he was scarcely out of his boyhood, and had recorded the expectations which he then formed in the well-known "Veltro" or "greyhound" prophecy of *H. i.* 101, which marked him out as one who should do great things for the good not of Verona only, but of all Italy. To him, accordingly, Dante, accompanied by Uguccone, now turned,* about the close of the year 1316.

* Some commentators, notably Troya, have identified Uguccone himself with the "Veltro," and they have a fairly strong case. It seems to me quite possible that when Dante wrote the first Canto of the *Inferno* his hopes may have hovered between the two, and that, sending the poem to Uguccone, he purposely wrote his oracle so that it might apply to either. At any rate, it is curious to think of the poet at Verona on terms of intimacy with the two claimants, one of whom had failed to fulfil the prophecy, while the other was at the height of fame, and able to inspire hopes of its fulfilment in the near future.

THE LIFE OF DANTE

Can Grande kept a stately court, patronised arts, had his palace adorned with paintings and sculptures adapted to the different characters of his guests (*Faur.* i. 233), which may possibly, as some have thought, have suggested the imagery of *Purg.* x. 30-105, xii. 16-69. Dante was received as an honoured guest, and in return resolved to dedicate the *Paradiso*, originally intended, it will be remembered, for Frederick of Aragon, to his new patron. In *Par.* xvii. 70-90 he had already immortalised his fame by an eulogy magnificent as that on the Malaspini in *Purg.* viii. 121-131. So far as the dedication deals with the plan and import of the poem, it will come before us elsewhere, but it supplies also materials or biography which have their right place here. It is undated, but we must at least assume that it was written after, or a very short time before, the completion of the *Paradiso*; that there must have been time for writing the fifteen Cantos of the poem which came after the eulogium of Canto xvii., and this would bring us, in all likelihood at least, to the early months of 1318. Up to that date, then, there

WANDERINGS AND DEATH

is evidence that there had been no breach of continuity in the friendship of the two men. The warmth of that friendship is indicated in every line of the dedicatory letter. He describes himself as *devotissimus*; he wishes his protector a long and happy life, an ever-increasing and perpetual fame. He had heard of him before his arrival at Verona. He came thither as the Queen of the South came to Jerusalem, as Pallas came to Helicon (*Met.* v. 254-267), the Bible and Ovid joined together, as commonly in Dante's thoughts. Like them, he found that he had heard a true report, but that it was surpassed by the reality. He saw Can Grande's magnificence, he experienced his goodness. Admiration and good-will passed into a devoted friendship. Did that word seem too bold? He would justify it by the many examples which history presented of friendship between the great and lowly, by the fact that friendship was possible even between God and man (*Wisd.* vii. 14). He wished to make some return, in proportion to his power, for all that he had received. He looked over all his writings with that intention, and finally selected

THE LIFE OF DANTE

the *Paradiso*. Its very title was a forecast of the glory of his benefactor's name. And so he proceeds to the analysis of the poem, with which we are not at present concerned. Even there also, in his patron's court, however, he found the salt savour of the bread which a man eats at another's table (*Par.* xvii. 58). I do not attach much weight to the gossip of Boccaccio, Sacchetti, and other writers of the valet type, but the anecdotes which they record are in themselves not improbable. They speak of the lofty, almost arrogant, pride of the poet, which made him unpopular among Can Grande's courtiers. They tell how his patron asked him why it was that a buffoon won greater favour with men than he with all his genius, and that he made answer that it was because "like loves like" (*Petr. Rer. Mem. in Tirab.* v. 27); how that as he sat in meditative reverie at his host's table, his companions played the practical joke of heaping up the bones left by all the guests at his feet, and laughed at him for his enormous appetite, and that he replied that had he been a "big dog" (*can grande*) they might have been his (*Arriv.*

WANDERINGS AND DEATH

p. 225).^{*} Such things were natural enough, and we can understand that, as they became more frequent, he would sigh for a more secluded retirement, and that his thoughts would turn to Guido da Polenta of Ravenna, who had, as we have seen, already employed him in a mission to Venice (p. 198). The whisperings of the pine woods of Chiassi (*Purg.* xxviii. 20) were more congenial to him than the coarse jesting which disturbed his tranquillity and made him speak unadvisedly with his lips. I do not find any evidence that his personal regard for Can Grande himself suffered any serious or permanent diminution. When, as I conceive, he returned to Verona, after a temporary absence, in January 1320 (1321?), and delivered his lecture *De Aquâ et Terrâ* (of which more hereafter) in the Church of St. Helena, it was in his patron's presence, and he still praises him as an "unconquered lord." Looking to the closing of the dedication letter

^{*} In *Conv.* ii. 11 we have the noticeable statement that if "courtesy" were to be interpreted as meaning the actual manners of the courts of Italy, it would connote "all that was most foul and base" (*turpessa*). This, however, was written some years before his stay at Verona.

THE LIFE OF DANTE

(*Ep.* xi. c. 32), in which he speaks of his poverty as compelling him to leave untouched tasks that might be useful to the State, and to the hopes he expresses that the bounty of Can Grande will in this matter come to his assistance, I incline to the belief that he was helped by that bounty to continue the study and the experiments of which the lecture *De Aquâ et Terrâ* was the outcome. Apparently he left his sons at Verona, and they probably remained there. They continued, at all events, to reside in that city after their father's death.

Of the life at Ravenna we have but scanty records. It lies in the nature of the case that it was a much quieter life than that at Verona. In order to understand it, we must remember that Dante's great work, on which he had spent the labour of twenty years, was now brought to its completion, and that there was a consequent blank in his life. It is not without a sense of satisfaction that we note as probable the fact that those last years at Ravenna were cheered by the presence of his daughter Beatrice, whose very name recalled all that was most precious in the history of

WANDERINGS AND DEATH

that poem from its *genesis* to its completion, and whom we find, long after his death, as a nun in a convent at Ravenna. Such a mind as his, however, could not remain inactive, and it would seem that he occupied himself (1) with the physical science studies, to which he had always been addicted, and of which we find the fruits in the treatise or lecture just mentioned, in which he speaks of himself as having from youth upward been occupied in like investigations; (2) in a return to the classical pursuits of his early years. Of the latter we have evidence in the interesting eclogues which passed between him and a friend, whose name has hitherto not come across our path, Joannes de Virgilio, and which help, if I mistake not, to throw light on the closing years of his life. Of that friend we know comparatively little. The name by which he was known, in place of any inherited patronymic, indicates that he was devoted to the study of Virgil, that he was recognised as a master of Virgilian style, and that was, of course, a bond of union between him and the Florentine poet. We know further that he

THE LIFE OF DANTE

was born at Bologna, that he was paid by the authorities of that city as a classical teacher, and that he was, though probably much younger, sufficiently intimate with Dante to be able to write to him on terms of equality. Dante, as we shall see, held his own, but it was apparently a refreshment to his wearied spirit to come into contact with a younger mind of tastes congenial with his own, and to go back to the forms of composition which had once been the delight of his own youth, the ground, perhaps, on which his earliest fame had rested (*H.* i. 87). As we have seen a man like Cardinal Newman amusing his old age by adapting a play of Terence for the pupils of a seminary, so it would seem to have been a refreshment to Dante, when his great task was ended, to write Virgilian eclogues. For us, at all events, they have the interest of being the only samples extant of Dante's Latin verse, an indication of what might have been had he written the *Commedia*, or ventured on handling other subjects, in that form. The letters are, it will be seen, rich in biographical materials.

WANDERINGS AND DEATH

The correspondence begins with a letter-eclogue from the scholar to the master. The former begins with complimenting his friend on his great work. The subject was lofty and grand; but why did he address such high matters to the profane vulgar in their own speech? He might reply that, though he wrote in the vulgar tongue of Italy, he yet addressed himself to scholars. Yes, was the answer, but scholars despise that tongue in all its varieties. He had placed himself as sixth in the goodly company of Latin poets (*H.* iv. 102); why should he not write, as they did, in their language? It was a mistake to cast his pearls before swine. Lofty subjects remained to be treated—the expedition of Henry VII., the exploits of Uguccione, the wars of Can Grande with Padua, of Robert of Naples with Genoa. These would give an epic by him a widespread and lasting fame. He could promise him an ovation and the laureate crown at Bologna. Would not Dante visit him and talk the matter over?

Dante makes answer, not, I think, without a playful irony at the advice which the younger

THE LIFE OF DANTE

scholar had given him. He adopts at once the Virgilian form of eclogue. He is Tityrus, the old man who had found in the protection of Augustus, the peace and safety which enabled him to write poetry. His young friend is Mopsus. Melibœus, = Dino Perini of Florence, was with him when he had received the letter. He had told him its substance, and had given his reasons for not acting on it. The fame and glory of poets had passed away. Even Mopsus (Joannes) had not known the sleepless nights by which the Muse is won. And he, for his part, preferred to shun the city where he would find but scanty welcome, and to wait till he could crown his grey hairs with the laurel wreath on the banks of the Arno (*Par.* xxv. 1-9). He would wait till his *Purgatory* and *Paradise* were made *publici juris*, as his *Hell* had already been, and stake his chance on that. True, Mopsus found fault with his writing in the vulgar tongue, and Dante read his criticism to Melibœus. How should they bring the Virgilian scholar to a better mind? To do this Tityrus would send ten vessels of

WANDERINGS AND DEATH

milk from his choicest ewe, probably, *i.e.*, ten Cantos of the *Purgatorio* or *Paradiso*.

Joannes returns to his remonstrance. He had received the precious MS. at Bologna. It seemed to him as though he heard the melodious murmur of the pine woods of Ravenna. But would not the "divine old man" whom he admired grant him one more favour? Rightly was he indignant with Florence. Would he not visit him, as he had already pressed him to do, at Bologna? There he would find the warmest welcome. Was not his house as safe a refuge as that of Iolas (= Guido da Polenta)? Admiration had ripened into love. Yes, he would give him, though it might be equivalent to sending milk to a shepherd (as we say, "coals to Newcastle"), poems for poems.* Would Iolas grudge the visit?

Tityrus, however, turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of his Mopsus. With a somewhat complicated symbolism he compares Bologna,

* Unconscious resemblances are always the most interesting, and, if I mistake not, the reader who shall compare this invitation with that which Tennyson addressed to F. D. Maurice in 1853 will thank me for suggesting the comparison.

THE LIFE OF DANTE

to which Joannes invited him, to the Cyclops' cave, and he dreads finding a Polyphemus in the Count Romeo de' Pepoli, who ruled that city. He prefers the dewy pastures of Pelorus which he finds in Ravenna. Yes, Romagna, after all, was the true Sicily, the true poets' land for him, and he would remain with Iolas.

Such is the last glimpse we get of Dante's mental life. The eclogue did not reach his friend till after the hand that wrote it was stiff and cold. There was a difference which threatened to pass into a quarrel between Venice and the Lord of Ravenna. At Guido da Polenta's request, Dante, in spite of the *fiasco* of his former embassy (p. 198), undertook a mission to arrange conditions of peace. It is probable that he took the opportunity of thus visiting the North of Italy to read the lecture *De Aquâ et Terrâ* at Verona, and then went on to Venice. His mission was not more successful than the former one had been. The Senate was shy and suspicious, and refused to hear him at any length. When he asked permission to return to Ravenna in one of their ships on the ground of health, they

WANDERINGS AND DEATH

refused, as dreading lest his subtle power of suasion should affect the loyalty of their admiral. He had to return through the singularly unhealthy region that lies between Venice and Ravenna in the most unhealthy period of the year (July or August), caught a fever, which rapidly mastered him, and died, under Guido da Polenta's roof, on September 14, 1321, at the age of fifty-six years and four months. So the life of the poet-prophet, with all its marvellous capacities, and strange experiences of joy and sorrow, and far-reaching knowledge and lofty aspirations, with its frustrated hopes and unfulfilled ideals, with one hope, the hope of an eternal fame, not frustrated, and one aspiration, we may trust, the aspiration after eternal life, abundantly fulfilled, came to its close, and the soul passed behind the veil to one of the mansions of the Father's house, for whatever discipline of purification or crown of righteousness the Eternal Wisdom and Love, after which, amid all seeming failures and partial waverings of faith, and sins of spirit or of sense, he had at least striven, saw fit to assign to him.

THE LIFE OF DANTE

According to one tradition (not perhaps very trustworthy), Dante's body was laid out, by his own desire, in the garb of a Franciscan friar, as though the approach of death had brought back the memory of the earlier period of his life, revived, it may be, by the admiration for the great Saint of Poverty expressed in *Par.* xi. Another tradition, not absolutely incompatible with this, runs to the effect that Guido da Polenta gave him a stately funeral, in which the body was seen with the poet's wreath of laurel on its head and the poet's lyre laid at its feet. Two epitaphs are on record, one reported to have been written by Dante himself, and still to be read on the tomb at Ravenna :—

S. V. F.

(Probably *Sibi Vivens Fecit.*)

*Jura Monarchiæ, Superos, Flegetonta lacusque
Lustrando, cecini, voluerunt fata quousque;
Sed quia pars cessit melioribus hospita castris,
Auctoremque suum petiit felicior astris,
Hic claudor Dantes, patriis extorris ab oris,
Quem genuit parvi Florentia mater amoris.*

“The laws of empire and the heavenly host,
The fiery lake and Phlegethon's dark coast,

WANDERINGS AND DEATH

These have I seen, of these have told the tale,
So long as fates propitious might prevail :
Now that my better part has fled as guest,
In happier regions finding peace and rest,
To its Creator soaring high and far,
In bliss and joy above each brightest star,
Here am I laid, I, Dante, far from home,
Exiled, from that fair city doomed to roam,
To whom I owed my birth, who yet did prove,
To me, her child, without a mother's love."

Grave reasons have, however, been urged (*Frat. V. D. c. 10*) against accepting these lines as authentic, and we have to fall back on the statement of Villani and Boccaccio that the first inscription on Dante's grave was written by the scholar-friend whose correspondence with him has come before us, Joannes de Virgilio.

*Theologus Dantes, nullius dogmatis expers,
Quod foveat claro philosophia sinu ;
Gloria Musarum, vulgo gratissimus auctor,
Hic jacet, et famâ pulsat utrumque polum :
Qui loca defunctis gelidis, regnumque gemellum
Distribuit logicis rhetoricisque modis.
Pascua Pieriis demum resonabat avenis :
Atropos heu ! lectum livida rapit opus.
Hinc ingrata tulit tristem Florentia fructum,
Exilium nato patria cruda suo.*

THE LIFE OF DANTE

*Quem pia Guidonis gremio Ravenna Novelli
Gaudet honorati conticuisse Ducis.
Mille trecentenis ter septem Numinis annis
Ad sua Septembribus idibus astra redit.*

“ Here Dante lies, divine, to whom ’twas given
To know each dogma of the truth of Heaven,
Which Wisdom true within her breast doth
cherish,
The Muses’ son, whose fame shall never perish ;
Who won men’s hearts by singing in their
tongue,
And gained a world-wide fame by what he
sung ;
Who with his subtle speech has painted well
That twofold Kingdom and the icy Hell ;
And then at last made glad each verdant lawn
With sweetest notes from reeds Pierian drawn.
Ah me ! pale Atropos that wish has marred,
And Florence, thankless to her son ill-starred,
Has from her cruel breast her offspring sent
To end his days in lifelong banishment.
Ravenna boasts that here he passed to rest
Upon her honoured leader Guido’s breast ;
In year one thousand, hundreds three, thrice
seven,
September’s ides, he sought his stars in
Heaven.” *

* It is noticeable that each of the epitaphs speaks of the “stars,” as Dante had spoken in the last lines of each part of the *Commedia*.

WANDERINGS AND DEATH

Here I end what I have to say of Dante's life. Of some points connected with the plan of his great work and the date and history of the others, of the estimate formed of him by his contemporaries and by posterity, of his influence on the literature of Europe and the politics of Italy, I speak elsewhere.*

* See vol. v., *Studies and Estimates*.

NOTE ON IRMER'S "ROMFAHRT"

DR. GEORGE IRMER'S *Romfahrt Kaiser Heinrich's VII.* is, as I have already said, a valuable contribution to the history of Dante's time. In the archives of Coblenz there are three MSS., each of them of the nature of a contemporary chronicle of the chief events in the life of Archbishop Baldwin, the youngest brother of the Emperor Henry of Luxemburg. One of these consists of seventy-three coloured drawings, representing every memorable incident, from the election of the boy-archbishop—he was but twenty-two at the time, and Papal dispensations were necessary to vindicate his consecration from the charge of irregularity—to the Emperor's death and interment. These have been reproduced in *facsimile* at the cost of the Prussian Government, and Dr. Irmer's letterpress which accompanies them is of the nature of an elaborate historical and archæolo-

THE LIFE OF DANTE

gical commentary. The artist clearly accompanied the Emperor's expedition, and here and there are found marginal notes in the Archbishop's handwriting. So far the work has all the interest of being that of a contemporary and eye-witness. In dealing with the previous history of the house of the Counts of Luxemburg, and in all that concerns the expedition as seen from a German point of view, Dr. Irmer's share of the work is sufficiently exhaustive, to the extent of identifying, at every stage, the armorial bearings of every banner or shield that appears in the several illustrations. It will be worth while to note the facts which have not already been noted in my summary of the history, and which present any points of possible contact with Dante's life.

The Emperor's father, Count Henry of Luxemburg, had a high reputation for courage, generosity, and the charm of a genial and chivalrous presence. His brother Walram was known as "*pulcherrimus hominum.*" They both died in battle against the Duke of Brabant in 1288. Henry seems, from Dante's account of him (*Epp.* 5, 7), to have inherited their personal

NOTE ON IRMER'S "ROMFAHRT"

advantages. His mother, Beatrice, daughter of Baldwin, Count of Avesnes—one wonders whether the name attracted Dante—was left with three sons, the future Emperor, born *circ.* 1270, Walram, born 1280, and Baldwin, born 1285. Henry soon began to show himself a worthy son of his father, forgave the knight who had dealt that father's death-blow, founded monasteries in the Luxemburg territory, and acted throughout in the spirit of the words which, as Emperor, he chose for the motto of his seal, *Iuste iudicate, filii hominum*. One can hardly help thinking that that choice was present to Dante's mind when he wrote his vision of the *Diligite iustitiam qui iudicatis terram* in *Par.* xviii. 76-99. In 1290 he was knighted by Philip the Fair of France, and in 1292 was married to Margaret of Brabant, of whom the chroniclers always speak as singularly devout and saintly. The third son, Baldwin, studied at Paris in 1299: one notes, as bearing on the age of university students, that he was then only fourteen. He was still pursuing his studies there in 1307. One of Dante's probable visits to Paris falls within those limits, and Henry

THE LIFE OF DANTE

himself was there with his brother in 1304. Probably they became acquainted there with Luitpold von Bebenberg, afterwards counsellor to Baldwin, who had studied at Bologna, and who wrote a book, presumably on the lines of the *De Monarchiâ*, with the title *De Regno et Imperio*.

In 1307 Baldwin, still at Paris, received the news of his election as Archbishop by the Dean and Chapter of Treves. He and Henry had both been present at the enthronement of Clement V. at Lyons. They found no difficulty in obtaining at his hand the necessary dispensations, and Baldwin was consecrated by him in the Cathedral of Poitiers, March 10, 1308. On their return to Treves in May, they were met by the tidings of the assassination of the Emperor Albert (May 1) by his nephew, John of Suabia. The young Archbishop found himself suddenly raised to a position of supreme importance. He was one of the electors of the Empire; it was his function, as Chancellor of the Empire, to summon the other electors. There was a rumour that Albert, as he was dying, had recommended Henry as his suc-

NOTE ON IRMER'S "ROMFAHRT"

cessor. The two brothers resolved that they would work together for the Imperial crown. Dr. Irmer tells the tale, as Menzel tells it, from the German point of view, speaks superciliously of Malaspina and Dino Compagni, and, curiously enough, makes not the slightest allusion to Villani. We are therefore left without any materials that connect themselves with the Italian intrigues and wire-pulling of which the last-named historian tells, and in which I think I can trace Dante's hand. All that can be said is that the facts which I have now epitomised are perfectly compatible with the inferences to which I have been led, and that they supply additional evidence of possible opportunities of a personal acquaintance on Dante's part both with the Archbishop and the Emperor.

When we enter on the actual history of the expedition to Italy, we are led over the same ground as that which we have already travelled, and it does not seem necessary to go over that ground again. What one notes in addition is that the Archbishop accompanied his brother from the first, almost to the close of the Emperor's life, returning to Treves with a view

THE LIFE OF DANTE

to collecting reinforcements only a few months before his death ; that the Empress Margaret and his younger brother, Walram, were also with him—the latter, it will be remembered, fell in battle at Brescia, the former died at Genoa ; that with the exception of his rigorous treatment of Cremona and Brescia, the Emperor's conduct was characterised by a chivalrous generosity ; that he halted to keep every great Church festival with a devout reverence ; that Florence was throughout the leader of the Guelph opposition to his claims, backed at first secretly, and then openly, by King Robert of Naples ; that the Cardinal da Prato appears in Irmer, as in Villani, as his constant and most indefatigable supporter ; that his chosen counsellor during the whole expedition was Nicolaus, a Dominican friar, probably from Luxemburg, and Bishop of Butrinto in Albania (*Murat.* ix. p. 886). But it is disappointing to find that the German standpoint is still that from which the whole story is told ; that the names of the Italian adherents of the Ghibelline cause are almost conspicuous by their absence ; that Dante and

NOTE ON IRMER'S "ROMFAHRT"

Can Grande come in only for a passing notice ; that Ugucione della Faggiuola, Moroello Malaspina, and Cino da Pistoia are not even named. Irmer conjectures that Dante's first interview with the Emperor was at Turin, and thinks it improbable that he was among the Italian delegates who met the Emperor at Genoa ; in neither case, it seems to me, on sufficient grounds. Among facts of which we can only say that they may have had a special interest for Dante, one notes the presence in Henry's army of one who was a poet as well as a knight, Werner of Homberg, whose exquisitely tender farewell to his wife on starting for Italy Irmer has happily given us ; and, as an example of the irony of history which marks the whole course of Henry's progress, his founding in February 1313, six months before his death, on the site of the old town of Poggibonsi—it had held out for Manfred and had been destroyed by the Guelphs after his death—a new city which was intended to be a memorial of Henry's triumph under the ambitious title of Monte Imperiale. Dr. Irmer gives, as the frontispiece of his volume, a photograph of the

THE LIFE OF DANTE

Emperor's head on the tomb which is now in the Campo Santo of Pisa, and so enables one to recognise the dreamy, idealist look, the *air de dormir mal*, of which I have already spoken. He furnishes the fact that the monument was erected by the Pisans, throughout conspicuous for their devotion to the Emperor, in 1315, and gives the striking words which come at the close of the inscription, *Quicquid facimus venit ex alto*; but he does not notice that at that time Pisa was governed by Uguccone della Faggiuola, Dante's friend, or what seems to me the eminently Dantesque character of the Latin words, as summing up his acceptance of the inscrutable decrees which had shattered all the hopes that the Florentine exile had so fondly cherished. Lastly, he records what is not without a touching pathos for us, that every year a solemn requiem is still sung in the Cathedral of Pisa on August 24th, as the anniversary of the Emperor's death.

INDEX

INDEX

ACQUASPARTA, Cardinal, 102,
107, 113, 115
Acre, capture of, 83
Adige, the, 128
"Agnus Dei" (curious appli-
cation), 170
Alagia, 142
Alberigo, 17, 117
Aldighieri, the, 22-25
Alessandro di Romena, 126
Ambrose, St., 207
Anagni, 129
Aquinas, St. Thomas, 151
Arbia, the river, 214
Aristotle, 65, 67
Arthurian legends, 35
Arnaud, Daniel, 35
Aruns the Seer, 142
Ascanius, 191
"Astræa redux," 175
Augustine, St., 207
Averrhoes, 67, 87
Avicenna, 87
Avignon, 116, 153, 203

BACON, Roger, 34 n., 154, 173
Baldwin, Bishop of Treves,
159, 242
Barbarossa, Frederic, 188

Beard, Dante's, 76
Beatrice, 16, 19, 30-32, 64,
67, 90, 95
Beaver, the, 166 n.
Bede, Venerable, 207
Belacqua, 36
Bellincione Berti, 39
Benedict XI., Pope, 129
Bertrand de Gotto, 164
Bianchi and Neri, 79, 81 n.,
112
Boccaccio, 13, 27, 37 n., 73,
75, 133, 140, 150
Boethius, 63, 65
Boniface VIII., Pope, 90, 94,
99, 100, 129, 153
Borgo Allegri, 36, 104
Bosone de Raffaele of Gub-
bio, 120, 121, 197
Browning, R. B., 35 n.
Brunetto, Latini, 32-34, 56, 69,
96
Buonconte di Montefeltro, 96
Buonomini, the fourteen, 84
Butler, Bishop, 34
Byron, Lord, 41-42, 78

CACCIAGUIDA, 23-24, 39
Calimala, 84, 85

INDEX

Campaldino, battle of, 57
 Can Grande, 18, 128, 222
 Caprona, capture of, 58
 Casella, 36, 96
 Cavalcanti, Guido, 70, 96, 103
 Cavalcanti, the, 92
 Cavour, Count, 82
 Charles Martel, 96
 Charles of Valois, 105
 Child-life pictures, 28
 Church, Dean, 15, 107
 Cicero, 65
 Cimabue, 35
 Cino da Pistoia, 37
 "Commedia," the first germ
 of the, 63
 Crown and mitre, 176, 193
 Cunizza, 38, 96

DANIEL, Arnaud, 35

Dante—

 his birthday, 26-27
 early boyhood, 21 *et seq.*
 family name, 22-25
 his portrait, 28
 "Incipient vita nova," 30, 47
 tastes and studies, 33, 55,
 68
 earliest sonnet, 49
 his friends, 35
 his "Wanderjahre," 40-43
 his beard, 57
 epistle to the Florentines,
 61
 married and public life, 61,
 et seq.
 membership of the Terti-
 aries, 71

 medical studies, 87
 the Apothecaries' Guild,
 89
 as Ambassador, 89
 his daughter Beatrice, 79
 philosophic unbelief, 92
 Holy Week in Rome, 93,
 96
 one of the Priori, 102, 106
 embassy to Rome, 107
 sentence of exile, 113
 embassy to Verona, 128
 wanderings, 132
 as procurator in a treaty of
 peace, 137
 journey to Paris, 150
 epistles to kings, nobles,
 &c., 183 *et seq.*
 embassy to Venice, 182,
 198
 letter to the Emperor, 189
 letter to the Cardinals at

 Carpentras, 204

Dante da Maiano, 26, 37
 Dickens, Charles, 78
 "Dittamondo," the, 75 n.
 Dominic, St., 96
 Donati, Corso, 103, 104
 Donati, Gemma, 75-78
 "Donna Gentile," the, 16
 Drokensford, Bishop of Bath
 and Wells, 48, 140, 209 n.

ELIZABETH of Hungary, 71
 Erastianism, 82

FARINATA degli Uberti, 96
 Florence, 48 n.

INDEX

Folco de' Portinari, 48
Forese de' Donati, 77, 96
Fra Alberigo, 17, 117
Fra Ilario, 18, 142 *et seq.*, 150
Francesco d'Accorso, 68
Francis, St., 71, 96
Fрати Gaudenti, 43
Frederic II., the Emperor,
92, 96

GEMMA DONATI, 75-78
Gems and pigments, 88
Gentucca, 211, 212
Gian della Bella, 70, 88, 100,
101
Giotto, 72, 94
Gregory VII., Pope, 82
Gregory X., Pope, 29, 44
Greyhound, the, 221
Guido Aretino (Guittone d'
Arezzo), 35
Guido Cavalcanti, 70, 96, 103
Guido Guinicelli, 35
Guido da Polenta, 225, 231,
232

HARDOUIN, Père, 14
"Harrowing of Hell," the,
97
Henry II. of England, 82
Henry IV., the Emperor, 155,
158, 168 *et seq.*
Holy Week at Rome, 93, 96

ILARIO, Frà, 18, 142 *et seq.*,
150
Innocent III., Pope, 82
Irmer, Dr. G., 180, 239 *et seq.*

JACOPO da Lentino, 35
Joannes de Virgilio, 74, 123
et seq.
Jubilee at Rome, the, 90, 91

KEN, Bishop, 177

"LACKLAND" (Charles of
Valois), 105
Lapa de' Cialuffi, 25
Lapo Salterello, 101, 102
Litta, 26 *n.*
Lowell, J. R., 15
Luitpold, Bishop, 68

MANFRED, 92
Mars statue, 39
Massinger, 91 *n.*
Matilda, 51, 95
Milman, Dean, 105
Milton, 78
"Monarchiâ, De," 68, 90,
100
Montaperti, battle of, 26

"NAVICELLA" of Giotto, the,
94
Neri and Bianchi, 79, 81 *n.*,
112

ORDELAFFI, Scarpetta degli,
127
Ozanam, A. F., 14

"PARGOLETTA," the, 66-6-
78, 80

INDEX

Philip le Bel, 105
 Philistines of his day, 66
 Polenta, Guido da, 225, 231,
 232
 Priori delle Arti, the, 85

RAVENNA, 226
 Riviera, the, 41
 Rossetti, G. D., 14

SALVINO degli Armati, 69
 Scripture, interpretation of, 64
 Serravalle, Giovanni da, 41,
 65 *n.*, 73, 74
 Sigier, 74
 Soncino, Currado da, 86
 Sordello, 35
 Spectacles invented, 69
 Spenser, 23 *n.*

TADDEO de' Bruzati, 86
 Tennyson, 231
 Theodosian Code, the, 40 *n.*
 Thucydides, 81 *n.*
 Trivium and Quadrivium, 40*a.*

ULTRAMONTANISM, 82
 Universities of Paris, Bologna,
 and Oxford, 40-42
 "Utrum sit Deus?" 93

VERONICA portrait, the, 91
 "Vexilla Regis," 97
 Virgilio, Joannes de, 74, 123
et seq.

WELLS, Registers of, 48, 203,
 209

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